



2020–2024

Community Forestry Management Plan

Borough of Atlantic Highlands

Monmouth County, NJ

2020 – 2024 COMMUNITY FORESTRY MANAGEMENT PLAN

Borough of Atlantic Highlands Monmouth County New Jersey

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Table of Contents

MUNICIPAL INFORMATION	1
Municipal Information Form	1
INTRODUCTION	2
Scope	2
Mission Statement	2
Overall Program Goals	2
Tree Hazards & Liability	3
COMMUNITY OVERVIEW	4
2015 – 2019 Community Forestry Program Review	4
Community Forestry Management Plan Benefits	7
Current Public Tree Assessment	7
Tree Canopy Cover	8
Relation to the Borough Master Plan	8
Relation to the Borough's Stormwater Management Plan	11
Map: Monmouth County & Borough Location	13
Map: Aerial Image	14
Map: Roads & Railways	15
Map: Land Use / Land Cover	16
Map: False Color Infrared Aerial Image	17
Map: Percent Tree Canopy Cover	18
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION	19
Community Forestry Program Structure	19
Community Forestry Program Responsibilities	19
Current Ordinances & Resolutions	22
Tree Service Request Procedures	22
2020 – 2024 Objectives	23
BUDGET & RESOURCES	25
Overview	25
Previous Grants Received	25
Employee Salary & Wages	25
Operations	25
Borough Equipment	25
Tree Planting	26
Tree Waste Recycling	26
Volunteer Services	26
Totals	26
TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	27
Training & Professional Development Goals	27
Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures	27
Current Training Needs	28
2020 – 2024 Objectives	28

PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS, & OUTREACH	30
<i>Public Education, Awareness, & Outreach Goals</i>	30
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	30
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	31
TREE INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT	33
<i>Tree Inventory & Assessment Goals</i>	33
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	33
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	33
TREE HAZARD MANAGEMENT	35
<i>Tree Hazard Management Goals</i>	35
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	35
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	35
TREE PLANTING	36
<i>Tree Planting Goals</i>	36
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	36
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	37
TREE MAINTENANCE	39
<i>Tree Maintenance Goals</i>	39
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	39
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	41
TREE WASTE RECYCLING	42
<i>Tree Waste Recycling Goals</i>	42
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	42
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	42
TREE CARE DISASTER PLAN	43
<i>Tree Care Disaster Plan Goals</i>	43
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	43
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	44
PLAN PREPARATION & EVALUATION	45
<i>Plan Preparation & Evaluation Goals</i>	45
<i>Existing Programs, Policies, & Procedures</i>	45
<i>2020 – 2024 Objectives</i>	45
SUMMARY OF 2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES	46
<i>Timeline</i>	46
RELATED ORDINANCES	51
<i>Related Ordinances</i>	51



Municipal / County Information Form

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MAYOR'S
SIGNATURE

** I Certify that this Community Forestry Management Plan was developed specifically and exclusively for Atlantic Highlands Borough.*

DATE SUBMITTED December 2020
TIME PERIOD January 2020 – December 2024

CSIP PRACTICES
IDENTIFIED
IN PLAN

☒	CSIP #1	Training	p. 27
☒	CSIP #2	Community Forestry Ordinance Establishment	p. 22, 23
☒	CSIP #3	Public Education & Awareness	p. 30
☒	CSIP #4	Arbor Day.....	p. 30, 31
☒	CSIP #5	Tree Inventory	p. 8, 33
☒	CSIP #6	Hazard Tree Assessment	p. 22, 29, 35, 41, 43
☒	CSIP #7	Storm Damage Assessment	p. 40, 43
☒	CSIP #8	Tree Maintenance & Removals	p. 39, 41
☒	CSIP #9	Insect and Disease Management	p. 27, 32, 37, 40, 43
☒	CSIP #10	Wildfire Protection	p. 43
☒	CSIP #11	Tree Planting	p. 23, 36
☒	CSIP #12	Tree Recycling	p. 42
☒	CSIP #13	Sidewalk Maintenance Program	p. 8, 40
☒	CSIP #14	Stormwater Management	p. 11
☒	CSIP #15	Other	various sections

Official Use Only Certification

The above named municipality has made formal application to the New Jersey Forest Service. I am pleased to advise you that after our review, the NJ Forest Service has concluded that this plan meets the standards set forth by the State and the NJ Community Forestry Council and is approved for the period covered.

Signed:

State Forester

10 Feb 21

Approved Date



Introduction

SCOPE

This Community Forestry Management Plan outlines the programs, policies, and procedures by which public shade tree and forest resources in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands will continue to be managed during the period of January 2020 through December 2024.

The Borough recognizes that healthy shade trees and forests are one of its valuable and critical assets, and it appreciates the benefits they offer in improving the quality of life in Atlantic Highlands. It also acknowledges its responsibility to properly maintain and replace those trees when they are inevitably lost to maximize and perpetuate these benefits.

In addition to ensuring the management of publicly owned trees and forests, implementation of this plan will continue to stimulate residents' appreciation for Atlantic Highlands' collective urban forest and the voluntary planting, protection, and care of trees on private property for the benefit of the entire community.

MISSION STATEMENT

To create and maintain a tree canopy that will enrich our community environmentally, aesthetically, and economically.

OVERALL PROGRAM GOALS

The New Jersey Community Forestry Council has identified fifteen Community Stewardship Incentive Program (CSIP) practices that comprise a complete and comprehensive community forestry program.

Within each of the plan elements that follow, existing programs, policies, and procedures are described, intermediate and element-specific goals are established, and CSIP-based objectives for the 2020 – 2024 management period are set.

Systematic fulfillment of these CSIP-specific goals and objectives will continue to advance Atlantic Highlands' Community Forestry Program toward its overall program goals, which are as follows:

1. Maximize the benefits that trees provide the Borough of Atlantic Highlands and its residents.
2. Maximize long-term stability and sustainability in the community forest.
3. Optimize the balance between tree condition, maintenance costs and budgetary constraints.
4. Minimize the risk of trees to public safety.
5. Minimize conflicts between trees, sidewalks, and other infrastructure.
6. Stimulate public interest, appreciation, and support for public shade tree programs.
7. Encourage the planting, preservation, and proper care of trees on private lands.
8. Increase and maintain the Borough's overall tree canopy cover at an appropriate level to be determined during this current five-year management period.
9. Satisfy all requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act.

TREE HAZARDS & LIABILITY

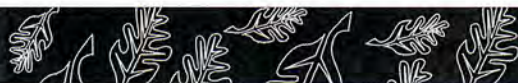
Public trees are regarded as a valuable asset that contributes immeasurably to the character of Atlantic Highlands. Yet, as with all municipal assets, trees require maintenance and potentially hazardous conditions may emerge.

It is widely recognized that comprehensive shade tree management programs that are proactive in their efforts to prevent, anticipate, and correct such problems will cost-effectively maximize the benefits of trees while minimizing the threat to public safety and exposure to liability. All elements of this plan are designed to optimize the balance between tree benefits and risks to public safety.

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands acknowledges that not all hazardous conditions can or will be predicted. It must work with limited resources spread over a large physical expanse and may not be able to meet every need immediately.

The intent of this plan is to direct available resources toward the greatest needs and systematically develop and maintain a healthy shade tree resource with a commensurate reduction in threats to public safety.

Public safety is a primary consideration in the development and implementation of all shade tree plans and programs. This plan provides a means of identifying and systematically addressing existing tree hazards. Further, it provides a means of reducing the potential for future hazards and liability through responsible planting and preventative maintenance.



2015 – 2019 COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM REVIEW

The Borough of Atlantic Highlands successfully completed several of the new objectives it had set in its 2015 – 2019 Community Forestry Management Plan while continuing previously existing programs, but a variety of circumstances prevented it from completing others.

The following is a summary of the Community Forestry Program's activities and accomplishments as they relate to objectives outlined in its 2015 – 2019 Community Forestry Management Plan.

1. *Program Administration*

- a) The Borough's Community Forestry Program continued to implement all its previously existing administrative programs, policies, and procedures.
- b) The Shade Tree Commission regularly addresses the Borough Council to present the Community Forestry Program's accomplishments, upcoming plans, and budget requests.
- c) In 2018, the Shade Tree Commission designated one of its members to serve as a liaison to coordinate efforts with the Borough Administrator and Department of Public Works.

2. *Training & Professional Development*

- a) The Borough continued its existing training programs and met New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act requirements for continuing education each year.
- b) Community Forestry Program volunteers and Borough employees acquired continuing education units by attending a wide range of training programs offered through the U.S. Forest Service's Urban Forest Connections webinar series, Rutgers University, the NJ Shade Tree Federation, the New Jersey Tree Foundation, First Energy / JCP&L, Monmouth County, and others.
- c) Over the past several years, Community Forestry Program participants attended training sessions covering a broad range of relevant topics, including:
 - i) Tree species selection and planting.
 - ii) Tree benefits.
 - iii) Emerald ash borer.
 - iv) Spotted lanternfly.
 - v) Establishing municipal tree canopy goals.
 - vi) Mitigating heat island effects.
 - vii) Successfully applying for grants.
 - viii) iTree software tools.
 - ix) Tree species identification.
 - x) Tree hazard identification.

3. *Public Education, Awareness, & Outreach*

- a) The Borough continued its previously established public education, awareness, and outreach programs.
- b) Arbor Day celebrations continued to be held each year through the cooperative efforts of the Borough Council and administration, the Shade Tree Commission, local elementary schools, and Parent Teachers Organizations. Celebrations have typically included tree

planting ceremonies, poster contests, library presentations about trees for children, and distribution of tree seedlings.

- c) For 39 years in a row as of 2020, the National Arbor Day Foundation has recognized Atlantic Highlands as a Tree City USA and awarded it with 8 Tree City USA Growth Awards for its efforts implementing a sound management program for its trees.
- d) The Shade Tree Commission routinely submitted press releases to local media regarding Community Forestry Program programs and events.
- e) In 2015, the Borough added a Shade Tree Commission page to the Borough's official website, www.ahnj.com. This page has been updated to include a variety of information regarding the Borough's Community Forestry Program including an overview of programs, policies, and events, relevant ordinances, forms for requesting tree planting and maintenance, Shade Tree Commission contact information and meeting minutes, links to tree-related information, and more.
- f) In 2015, the Shade Tree Commission designed a new logo and is working to incorporate it into all its materials to help ensure consistent, recognizable branding.
- g) The Shade Tree Commission maintained presence, answered questions, and distributed information to the community at various local events including the Farmer's Market, Atlantic Highlands Historical Society Flea Market, Classic Car Show, and Taste of Atlantic Highlands.
- h) The Shade Tree Commissions established and continued to actively maintain a popular Facebook page, which helps keep residents informed of upcoming public meeting and events, proper tree maintenance, and the benefits trees provide to human health and environmental sustainability, both locally and globally.
- i) The Borough established a "Trees for Tomorrow Fund" through which residents, businesses, and local organizations can contribute to the purchase and planting of public trees in Atlantic Highlands. The program was advertised via the Shade Tree Commission web and Facebook pages and donation envelopes were produced and made available at various locations. During this current five-year management period, the Shade Tree Commission will develop and implement additional methods of advertising and increasing participation in the program.
- j) The Borough established a "Tribute Trees" program through which individuals may request and donate the planting of a tree at various locations in the Borough in memory or honor of current or former Borough Officials, Borough Employees, or members of Borough Committees and organizations.
- k) The Shade Tree Commission created, published, and distributed a professionally printed rack-card which outlines the Commission's mission, describes the benefits of trees, and invites residents to request the planting of a tree on their property.
- l) Each year, the Shade Tree Commission hosted its annual Stakeholders Meeting for the Mayor and Council, related departments and boards, local organizations, and the general public. Guest speakers at each meeting have covered a variety of topics of general interest including a review of the work, policies, and procedures of Atlantic Highland's Community Forestry Program, the design and implementation of tree plantings at the National September 11 Memorial in Manhattan, and a review of JCP&L's policies and procedures regarding conflicts between trees and utility wires.
- m) In 2016, the Shade Tree Commission organized a "My Favorite Tree Photo Contest" to encourage residents to appreciate trees in their daily lives. Selected winners were awarded gift cards.
- n) In 2017, the Shade Tree Commission published a shade tree newsletter that covered a variety of topics including an overview of the Commission and its work, how residents can get involved, Tree City, the Trees for Tomorrow Fund, and various articles regarding trees and their benefits. This newsletter was mailed to all Borough residents and handed out at local events.

4. *Tree Inventory & Assessment*

- a) In 2017, the Shade Tree Commission retained Richview Consulting to conduct a partial inventory of the Borough's street tree resources. All collected data was entered into an *iTree Streets* database and reports were generated to provide a preliminary overview of the structure, composition, and benefits provided by the street tree population.
- b) Due to budget constraints, only approximately 50% of the Borough's municipal, county, and state road mileage was completed. It is a primary objective of this current five-year management period to complete the street tree inventory.
- c) The Shade Tree Commission has begun using the partial street tree inventory results to identify priority maintenance needs, identify available planting locations, and generally guide its decision-making toward a more diverse and sustainable tree population.

5. *Tree Hazard Management*

- a) The Borough continued to implement its previously existing programs, policies, and procedures to identify trees requiring maintenance and addressed them in priority order to minimize potential tree hazard threats on an ongoing basis.
- b) Following completion of the partial street tree inventory, the Shade Tree Commission coordinated with the Department of Public Works to address trees identified as requiring removal on a priority basis to help ensure public safety.

6. *Tree Planting*

- a) The Borough continued all its previously existing tree planting programs, policies, and procedures.
- b) In 2019, the Borough planted 10 trees along Hennessey Boulevard. It was unable to complete all of the trees planned for Hennessey Boulevard, however, due to unforeseen infrastructure conflicts. As a result, the remaining trees were planted elsewhere throughout the Borough.
- c) The Shade Tree Commission developed preliminary plans for new tree plantings in Firemen's Field. At present, the project has stalled due to insufficient resources and precautions during the COVID-19 pandemic and will be revisited in the future.
- d) When necessary, the Borough recruited volunteers to water newly planted trees.

7. *Tree Maintenance*

- a) The Borough continued to implement its previously existing tree maintenance programs, policies, and procedures.
- b) In 2015, the Shade Tree Commission designed and posted downloadable forms for the public's use in reporting tree maintenance issues.
- c) The Borough developed and maintained a cooperative working relationship with JCP+L's local Utility Forester to help balance the utility's need to minimize tree-related outages while also minimizing detrimental impacts to the trees.
- d) In 2016, the Department of Public Works purchased a bucket truck suitable for completing various low and mid-height tasks.

8. *Tree Waste Recycling*

- a) The Borough continued to implement all its previously existing tree waste recycling programs, policies, and procedures.

9. *Tree Care Disaster Plan*

- a) The Borough of Atlantic Highlands continued to implement its previously existing tree care disaster plan programs, policies, and procedures when needed and stood ready to promptly address storm-related damage.

**COMMUNITY
FORESTRY
MANAGEMENT
PLAN BENEFITS**

10. Plan Preparation & Evaluation

- a) The Borough of Atlantic Highlands has prepared this fourth consecutive five-year Community Forestry Management Plan for the 2020 – 2024 management period based on a thorough review of its goals, objectives, and current needs.

Since it began implementing a comprehensive Community Forestry Management Plan fifteen years ago, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands has realized several benefits, which include the following:

1. Through this plan, the Borough maintains a clear set of goals and operating procedures that survive and remain consistent as individual employees and volunteers leave the program and new ones join.
2. Training and professional development completed in accordance with the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act requirements has increased the number of employees and volunteers that have improved their level of knowledge in the principles and day-to-day practices of urban forest management.
3. The Shade Tree Commission, the Department of Public Works, and the Borough administration all working toward clear and common goals, have developed a strong, cooperative relationship in managing the Borough's public tree resource.
4. Both long-term decision making and day-to-day operations are more focused and accurately and efficiently directed at existing needs.
5. Ongoing public education, awareness, and outreach efforts have increased public awareness of the importance of trees on private lands in the Borough.
6. During its period of approved status and active participation in the New Jersey Community Forestry Program, the Borough was able to identify and utilize various grant programs.

**CURRENT
PUBLIC TREE
ASSESSMENT**

In 2017, the Shade Tree Commission retained Richview Consulting to conduct a partial inventory of the Borough's street tree resources. Collected data was entered into an *iTree Streets* database and reports were generated to provide a preliminary overview of the structure, composition, and benefits provided by the street tree population. Due to budget constraints, only approximately 50% of the Borough's road mileage was completed. It is a primary objective of this current five-year management period to complete the street tree inventory.

The following is a summary of the 2017 Street Tree Inventory findings. For management purposes, it is assumed that the portion of roads inventoried is representative and can be extrapolated and generally applied to the incomplete portions. The Borough currently lacks an inventory and assessment of trees in Borough parks and on other Borough lands.

1. The 2017 Street Tree Inventory recorded 855 trees along the roads included (approximately 50% of the total road mileage). This included 628 Borough-owned trees (i.e. within the right-of-way boundaries) and 227 privately-owned trees.
2. Because "vacant" planting sites (treeless locations that can be planted) and existing stumps were not inventoried, current street tree stocking levels are not known.
3. The Street Tree Inventory identified 47 different species representing 31 different genera.
4. While the number of genera and species identified suggests good diversity, just a few disproportionately comprise a vast majority of the street tree population. Improved species diversity is necessary to help guard the street tree population from species-specific vulnerabilities.
5. The most frequent genera are *Pyrus* (pears; 31.7% of all street trees inventoried), *Acer* (maples; 23.4%), *Prunus* (cherries and plums; 20.1%), *Platanus* (sycamores and planes; 6.2%), *Quercus* (oaks; 4.8%), and *Tilia* (lindens; 2.5%). Three other genera each comprise 1% - 2% of the street

tree population, and 22 other genera each comprise less than 1% with several being represented by just a single tree.

6. The most frequent species are *Pyrus calleryana* (Callery pear; 31.7% of all street trees inventoried), *Prunus serrulata* (Japanese flowering cherry; 18.6%), *Acer platanoides* (Norway maple; 13.9%), *Acer rubrum* (red maple; 7.8%), *Platanus x acerifolia* (London planetree; 6.2%), and *Quercus montana* (chestnut oak; 2.3%). Five other species each comprise 1% - 2% of the street tree population, and 36 other species each comprise less than 1% with several being represented by just a single tree.
7. The age structure of the street tree population is irregular uneven aged, meaning that there are significant numbers of trees in at least three age classes, but they are not evenly distributed from young to old. A majority of the inventoried street trees are mature, though there are significant numbers in the young and over-mature age classes. Developing a more uneven-aged population (similar numbers of trees in all age ranges, versus an even-aged population where most trees are of similar age) is recommended to help keep annual losses due to age attrition relatively stable over the long term.
8. The street tree population was found to be in relatively good condition with 71.7% rated in Good condition, 13.2% rated in Fair condition, 13.3% rated in Poor condition, and 1.3% found to be dead or dying.
9. Approximately 13% of the inventoried trees have caused moderate to moderately severe heaving of adjacent sidewalks.
10. Based on the assumption that 50% of the total road mileage and, therefore, 50% of the trees were inventoried in 2017, the value of reduced energy consumption, carbon dioxide absorption, air quality improvement, stormwater mitigation, and aesthetic contributions provided by Atlantic Highlands' street trees is estimated at \$237,000.00 per year (as calculated by algorithms contained in iTree Streets, USDA Forest Service, et al).

TREE CANOPY COVER

Statistics derived from the Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium's (MRLC) 2011 National Land Cover Database, as accessed via the NJ Forest Adapt website in December 2020, indicate that Atlantic Highlands' public and private urban forest canopy collectively covered an estimated 38% of its total land area. Canopy coverage averaged 35.7% in areas classified as urban land use types, and total impervious surface cover averaged 31% of the Borough.

It is not clear to what extent losses to normal attrition, storm damage, and tree removal, and gains from new tree planting and the growth of existing trees may have changed the current canopy level since the data was collected in 2011.

40% tree canopy cover is frequently recommended for metropolitan areas in the northeast to ensure sufficient physical benefits community-wide and to address climate change.

It is the Borough's goal to increase and maintain its canopy cover at 40% of its total land area with focus on improving coverage in the more highly developed areas.

Because trees have a finite life expectancy and because much of the Borough's existing urban forest is mature and will deteriorate in the coming decades, ongoing tree replacement is vitally important to perpetuate the canopy at its current level over the long term. And, because there is limited available space for new planting, the Borough must encourage private property owners to plant and maintain trees on their land and simultaneously seek opportunities for new planting in existing open spaces to realize meaningful gains in Borough-wide canopy cover.

RELATION TO THE BOROUGH MASTER PLAN

All aspects of this Community Forestry Management Plan are consistent, compatible, and directly or indirectly supportive of the goals, objectives, and general intent of the Borough's 2019 Master Plan.

In general, comprehensive shade tree management efforts will help enhance the aesthetic appeal of residential and commercial streetscapes, improve air quality, contribute to combatting climate

change, and help safeguard the well-being of Atlantic Highlands residents. Further, these efforts will ensure that a beneficial shade tree resource is perpetuated so that the physical, economic, and social benefits they provide to the community will continue, uninterrupted, over the long term.

Specific goals and objectives of the 2019 Master Plan to which this Community Forestry Management Plan directly or indirectly relate include:

- Focus on the preservation and physical enhancement of the historic district on Victorian Hill by means of better documentation and public interpretation. Similar efforts will be made for the Victorian architectural heritage and streetscapes on the west side of town. (*Heritage Objectives p.IV-1*)
- Continue to improve the balance between housing development and open space preservation, with the aim of providing residents increased opportunities for active and passive recreation (including bay front activities, trails, and greenways), maintaining natural buffers and wildlife habitat, and sustaining property values and residents' enjoyment that depend in part on these assets. (*Housing Objectives p.IV-3*)
- Promote environmental sustainability in the development and renovation of residential property in accordance with the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) that sets standards for site development, water and energy efficiency, material selection, indoor environmental quality, and other environmental design factors. (*Housing Objectives p.IV-3*)
- Encourage structural and aesthetic improvements in the business and entertainment and light industry districts to strengthen their commercial attraction, promote a viable economic base, and expand the choice of goods, services, and employment available within the Borough. (*Commerce Goal p.IV-3*)
- Continue Borough efforts to upgrade and revitalize the business and entertainment district to attract businesses and customers, while maintaining and strengthening its characteristics - human scale and pedestrian friendliness, small-town/small-shops nature, inviting and restful traditional streetscape treatment, historic-style storefronts, low-key signage, convenient parking, litter-free environment, etc. (*Commerce Objectives p.IV-4*)
- Continue plans to link the business and entertainment district with the Many Mind Creek greenway, the waterfront, and the harbor. Study redevelopment possibilities in the West Avenue corridor south of Highland Avenue and the light industry district that would improve business prospects, the mix of uses and services provided, the aesthetics of structures and streetscapes, vehicular and pedestrian access, traffic and circulation patterns, etc., while also creating the greenway along the district's "back yard" of Many Mind Creek and enhancing its streambed and bank conditions, vegetated buffer, wetland functionality, flood control, and aesthetic appearance. (*Commerce Objectives p.IV-4*)
- Improve pedestrian and cyclist safety through repair, restoration, installation of sidewalks and bike lanes throughout the Borough. (*Commerce Objectives p.IV-4*)
- Promote environmental sustainability in the development and renovation of commercial property in accordance with the U.S. Green Building council's LEED system (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) that sets standards for site development, water and energy efficiency, material selection, indoor environmental quality, and other environmental design factors. (*Commerce Objectives p.IV-4*)
- ...Improve the quality of the Borough's network of roadways, trails, and gateways. (*Linkages and Edges Goal p.IV-5*)
- Implement the concept plan for Many Mind Creek and its greenway trail as the missing link between the Henry Hudson Trail from the west and greenway Trail to the east. This will provide a walking and biking connection from west side residential areas to recreation at Firemen's Field, the business district and Marina. (*Linkages and Edges Objectives p.IV-5*)

- Pursue needed trail linkages and extensions in the Lenape Woods Nature Preserve to connect the existing east and west sections, create a trail eastward to Mount Mitchill Scenic Overlook, complete links downhill to the future Trail, and cooperate with Middletown Township on the proposed pedestrian bridge from the Preserve to the Campo Trails south of New Jersey Route 36. (*Linkages and Edges Objectives p.IV-5*)
- Improve sidewalks and bike lanes to facilitate pedestrian and bike travel in modes similar to that of a transit village. (*Linkages and Edges Objectives p.IV-6*)
- Improve community preparedness in case of storms, flooding, or other disasters that have impact on the Borough. (*Linkages and Edges Objectives p.IV-6*)
- Implement adopted stormwater management measures in order to reduce nonpoint pollution, control erosion and sedimentation, reduce flooding and gain the full benefit from wetlands and stream buffers. (*Infrastructure and Sustainability Objectives p.IV-6*)
- Continue the Borough street improvement program to maintain and improve the local road systems. (*Infrastructure and Sustainability Objectives p.IV-7*)
- Identify scenic roadways for designation on updated mapping and develop construction guidelines to preserve the roadways and their public views. (*Infrastructure and Sustainability Objectives p.IV-7*)
- Continue the Borough's commitment to open space preservation. (*Community Objectives p.IV-8*)
- Maintain pedestrian and bike friendly streetscapes where they currently exist and create additional areas where feasible to address needs. (*Community Objectives p.IV-8*)
- Formally adopt measures for existing tree maintenance and protection, in addition to existing measures in the steep slope zone and add language to Borough ordinances regarding planting requirements for new development to strengthen the steep slope stability in the Borough. (*Community Objectives p.IV-8*)
- Protect natural resources such as streams and stream banks, beaches, steep slopes and slump block zones, forests, and wetlands. (*Community Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers against highway noise and air pollution, saving natural habitat needed by birds and wildlife, and preserving tree mass that moderates temperature and wind effects and to provide stability to the steep slope and slump block areas of the Borough. (*Community Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Add to natural/environmental education opportunities available to children and adults. (*Community Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Provide increased protection from flooding by maintaining and improving existing wetland areas that absorb storm surge and run-off. (*Community Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Identify all of the natural resources within the Borough and develop comprehensive plans for the conservation of those resources. (*Natural Resources Goal p.IV-9*)
- Protect natural resources such as streams and stream banks, bay coast and beaches, steep slopes and slump block zones, forests, and wetlands. (*Natural Resources Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Preserve and enhance the environment by maintaining existing buffers and establishing new buffers where necessary. (*Natural Resources Objectives p.IV-9*)
- Protection of woodlands and tree cover for the stability of both slopes and soil; the control of erosion; the reduction of sediment reaching the streams, the harbor, the bay; the retention of rain and groundwater (the source of the Borough's drinking water); the supply of nutrients needed for other kinds of vegetation; the provision of shelter and habitat needed by birds and other wildlife; the counteracting of car fumes and other air pollution; the maintenance of buffers against traffic noise, for shade relief and cooling effects in summer; for the moderation of wind effects; for privacy buffers between residences; and screening between different land uses (residential, commercial, industrial, etc.). (*Natural Resources Objectives p.IV-9*)

**RELATION TO
THE BOROUGH'S
STORMWATER
MANAGEMENT
PLAN**

- Strengthen monitoring and enforcement of unauthorized tree removal, slope disturbance, wetland infill and other abuses of natural resources. (*Natural Resources Objectives p.IV-10*)
- Continue the measures required under the State-mandated Borough stormwater management plan and ordinance; undertake follow-up projects recommended in the regional stormwater management program for the Many Mind Creek watershed; and develop further ordinances as necessary for the implementation of the above objectives. (*Natural Resources Objectives p.IV-10*)

Implementation of this Community Forestry Management Plan will directly help satisfy, or directly or indirectly support these and other goals and objectives of the Atlantic Highlands Master Plan.

In addition, sections of the Borough Code relating to zoning, subdivisions, land use, and site plan review contain specific requirements regarding trees, landscaping, and buffers that relate to the goals and objectives of both the Master Plan and this Community Forestry Management Plan.

All programs outlined in this Community Forestry Management Plan will be developed and implemented in a manner that will continue to satisfy or support the goals, objectives, and general intent of the Borough's Master Plan.

There are several physical characteristics of Atlantic Highlands that make effective stormwater management critically important:

1. Much of the Borough sits on steep, wooded coastal bluffs above Sandy Hook Bay. In these areas, slopes average 15% and many built areas have slopes of 20% or more. Several slump blocks have been identified where slumping and landslides causing substantial property damage have occurred, or are likely to occur. Trees and other vegetation play a vital role in maintaining the integrity and stability of these slopes.
2. The Many Mind Watershed covers most of Atlantic Highlands' land area; Many Mind Creek and Wagner Creek are the primary drainage channels that carry nearly all the Borough's surface water to Raritan and Sandy Hook Bays. The water and habitat quality of Many Mind Creek has been degraded over the years by increased impervious cover, stream bank degradation, sedimentation, non-point source pollution, historical filling, and habitat losses.
3. Most of the 100-year floodplain areas in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands are highly developed with residential and commercial uses and several areas of the Borough commonly flood during storms. It is expected that sea level rise will increase flooding hazards in some areas of the Borough.
4. Flooding from coastal storms is a serious threat to life and property with the potential for extensive property damage and disruptions to critical services.

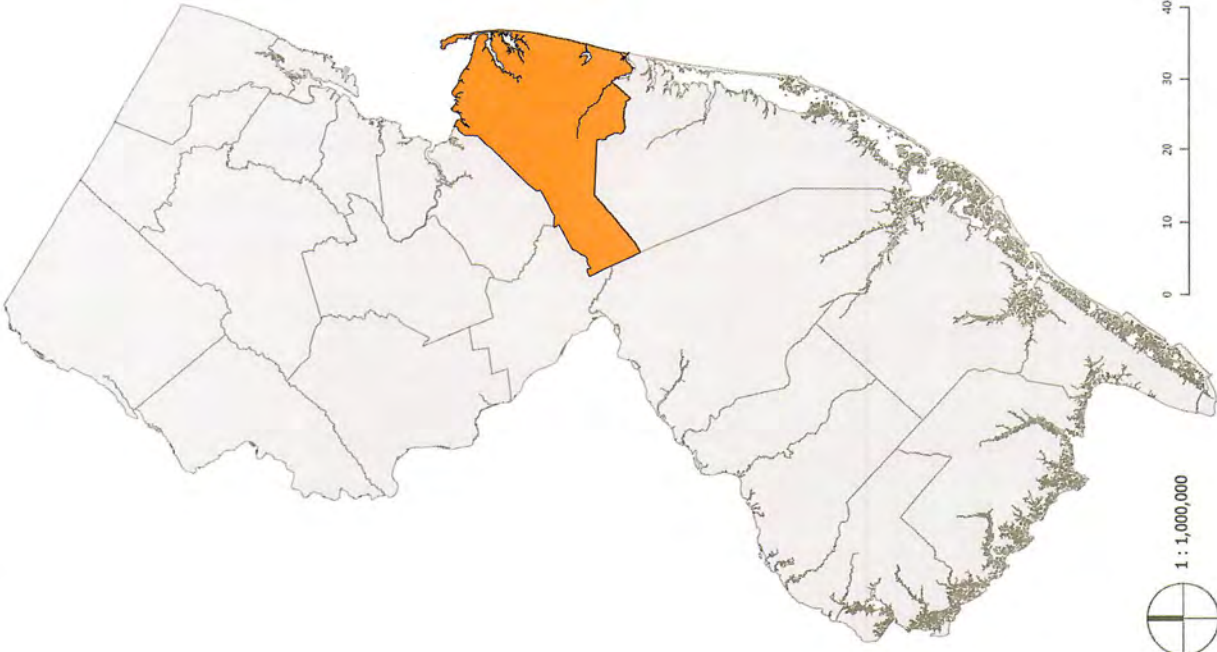
Atlantic Highlands' 2019 Master Plan establishes policies and provides specific requirements and recommendations to minimize stormwater runoff, reduce soil erosion, minimize non-point contamination of local water bodies, and maintain groundwater recharge in accordance with State regulations.

Further, Chapter 306, *Stormwater Control* and Chapter 311, *Stormwater Management* of the Borough Code contain specific requirements designed to protect sensitive lands during development, improve current conditions, and promote non-structural and low-impact techniques for stormwater management.

Trees and other vegetation are a key component of the hydrologic cycle, stabilize and reduce the erosion of soils, improve percolation of surface water into the ground, and absorb pollutants. As such, implementation of this Community Forestry Management Plan will contribute significantly to several goals and objectives of the Borough's stormwater management efforts.

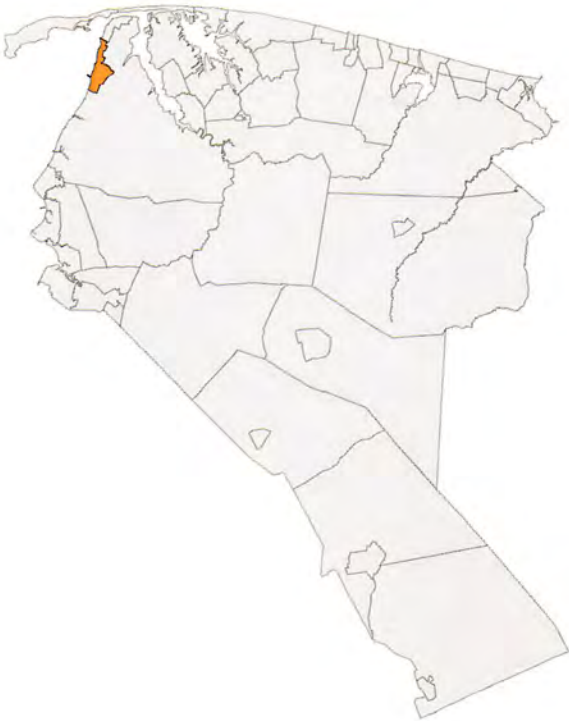
Increased levels of tree canopy and vegetative cover are directly correlated to improved water quality, reduced risk of flooding, and improved slope stabilization. As such, in addition to its municipal efforts, the Borough encourages private property owners to preserve, plant, and maintain trees, shrubs, and other vegetation on their property to further reduce impervious groundcover, ensure efficient natural drainage, reduce the risk and severity of flooding, and minimize the runoff of silt, nutrients, and pollutant laden stormwater into local water networks. The planting of low-maintenance landscapes that minimize pesticide usage is strongly recommended.

ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ: MONMOUTH COUNTY & BOROUGH LOCATION



New Jersey counties map generated from the NJ Office of Information Technology (NJGIT), Office of Geographic Information Systems (OGIS) "Municipalities of New Jersey (Clipped to Coast) Edition 20121228" data (2012).

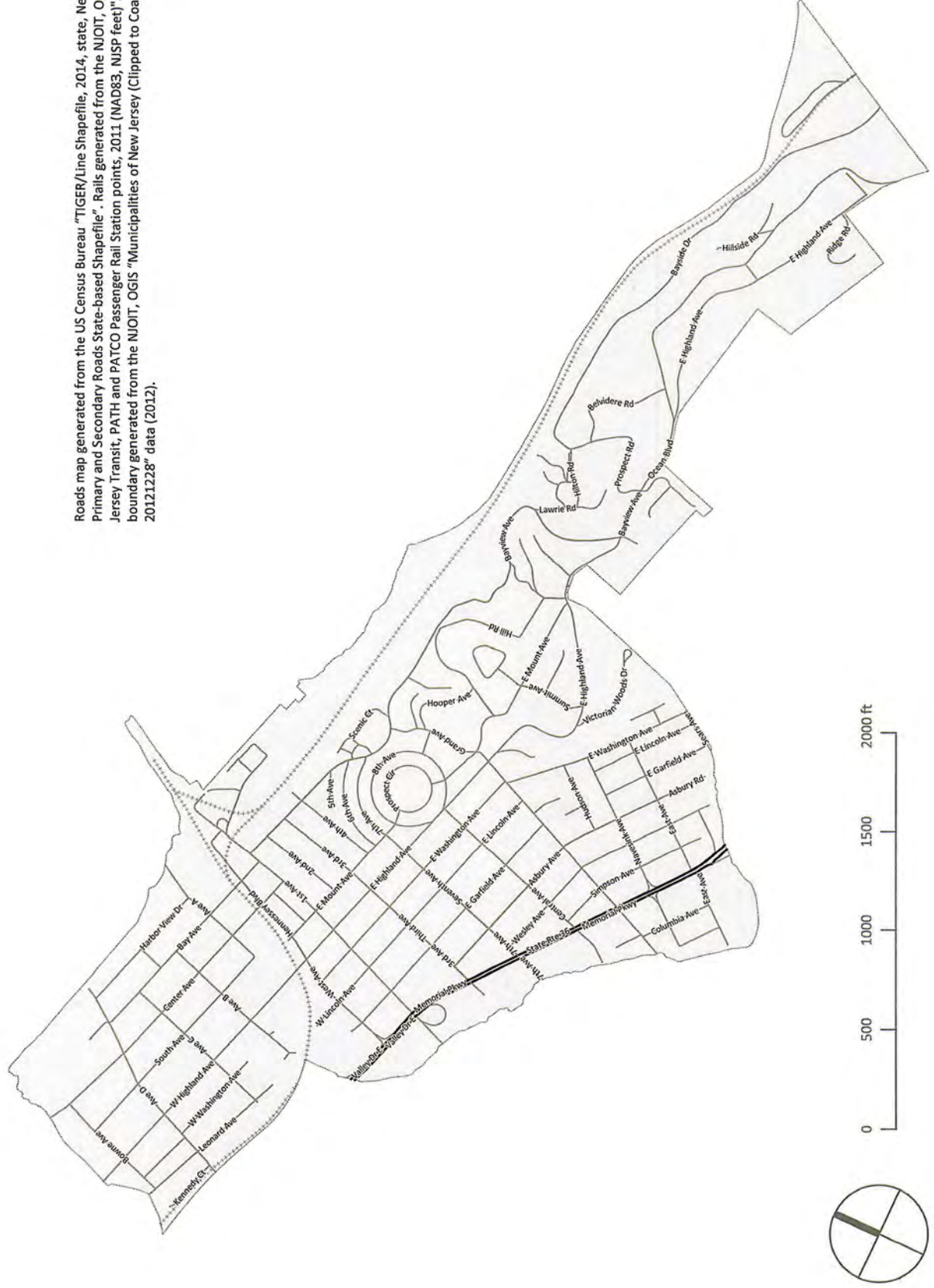
Monmouth County municipalities map generated from the NJGIT, OGIS "Municipalities of New Jersey (Clipped to Coast) Edition 20121228" data (2012).



ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ: AERIAL IMAGE



ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ: ROADS & RAILWAYS



Roads map generated from the US Census Bureau "TIGER/Line Shapefile, 2014, state, New Jersey, Primary and Secondary Roads State-based Shapefile". Rails generated from the NJOT, OGIS "New Jersey Transit, PATH and PATCO Passenger Rail Station points, 2011 (NAD83, NISP feet)". Municipal boundary generated from the NJOT, OGIS "Municipalities of New Jersey (Clipped to Coast) Edition 20121228" data (2012).

ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ: LAND USE / LAND COVER

Land use/land cover map generated from the NJOTIT, OGIS "Land Use/Land Cover 2012 Update" data.

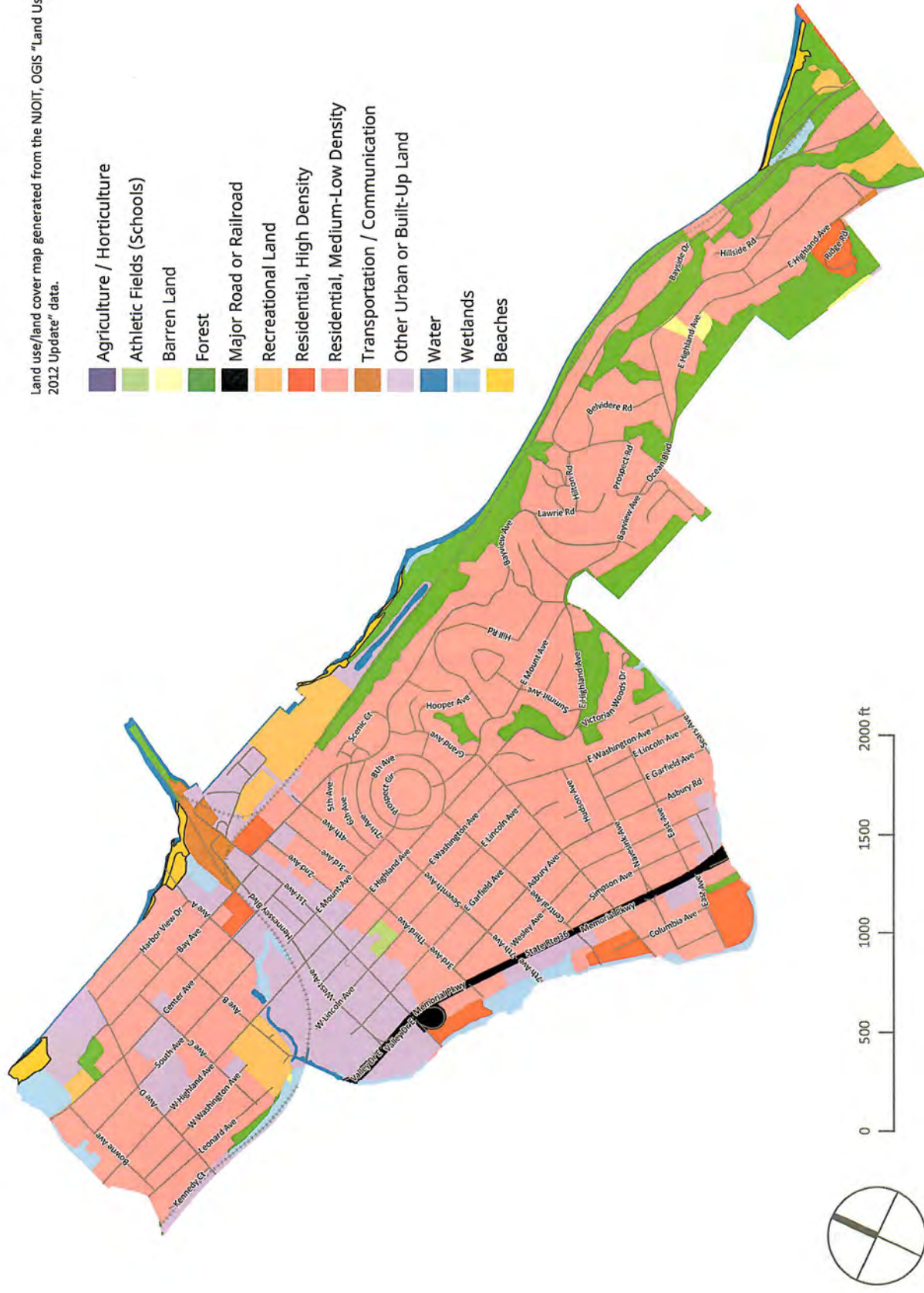
Legend:

- Agriculture / Horticulture
- Athletic Fields (Schools)
- Barren Land
- Forest
- Major Road or Railroad
- Recreational Land
- Residential, High Density
- Residential, Medium-Low Density
- Transportation / Communication
- Other Urban or Built-Up Land
- Water
- Wetlands
- Beaches

Map Labels:

Harbor View Dr, Bay Ave, Center Ave, Kennedy Ct, W Highland Ave, W Washington Ave, Leonard Ave, 13th Ave, 14th Ave, 15th Ave, 16th Ave, 17th Ave, 18th Ave, 19th Ave, 20th Ave, 21st Ave, 22nd Ave, 23rd Ave, 24th Ave, 25th Ave, 26th Ave, 27th Ave, 28th Ave, 29th Ave, 30th Ave, 31st Ave, 32nd Ave, 33rd Ave, 34th Ave, 35th Ave, 36th Ave, 37th Ave, 38th Ave, 39th Ave, 40th Ave, 41st Ave, 42nd Ave, 43rd Ave, 44th Ave, 45th Ave, 46th Ave, 47th Ave, 48th Ave, 49th Ave, 50th Ave, 51st Ave, 52nd Ave, 53rd Ave, 54th Ave, 55th Ave, 56th Ave, 57th Ave, 58th Ave, 59th Ave, 60th Ave, 61st Ave, 62nd Ave, 63rd Ave, 64th Ave, 65th Ave, 66th Ave, 67th Ave, 68th Ave, 69th Ave, 70th Ave, 71st Ave, 72nd Ave, 73rd Ave, 74th Ave, 75th Ave, 76th Ave, 77th Ave, 78th Ave, 79th Ave, 80th Ave, 81st Ave, 82nd Ave, 83rd Ave, 84th Ave, 85th Ave, 86th Ave, 87th Ave, 88th Ave, 89th Ave, 90th Ave, 91st Ave, 92nd Ave, 93rd Ave, 94th Ave, 95th Ave, 96th Ave, 97th Ave, 98th Ave, 99th Ave, 100th Ave, 101st Ave, 102nd Ave, 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Land use/land cover map generated from the NJOIT, OGIS "Land Use/Land Cover 2012 Update" data.



ATLANTIC HIGHLANDS, NJ: FALSE COLOR INFRARED AERIAL IMAGE



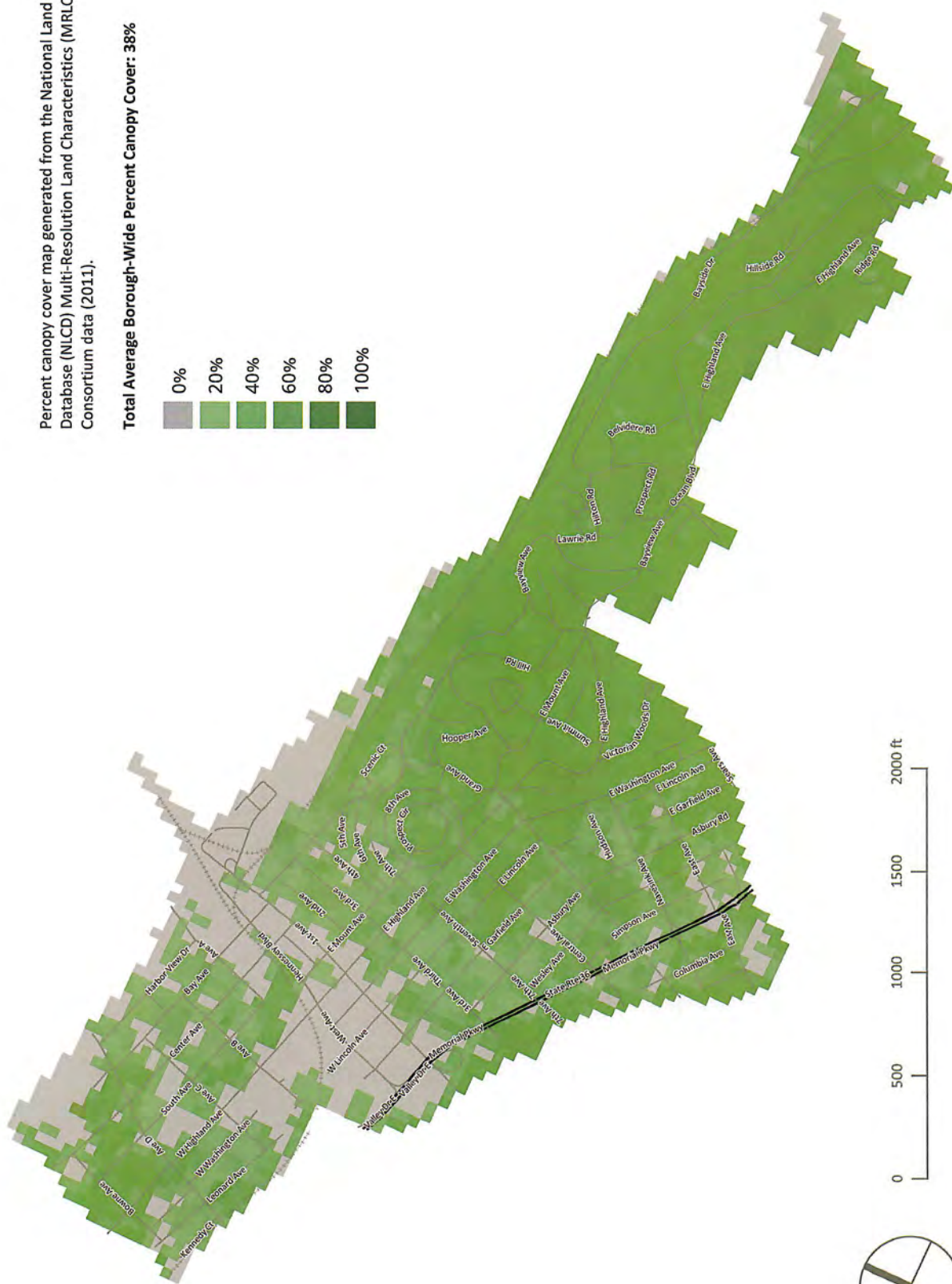
Percent canopy cover map generated from the National Land Database (NLCD) Multi-Resolution Land Characteristics Consortium data (2011).

Total Average Borough-Wide Percent Canopy Cover: 38%

0%
20%
40%
60%
80%
100%

0 500 1000 1500 2000 ft

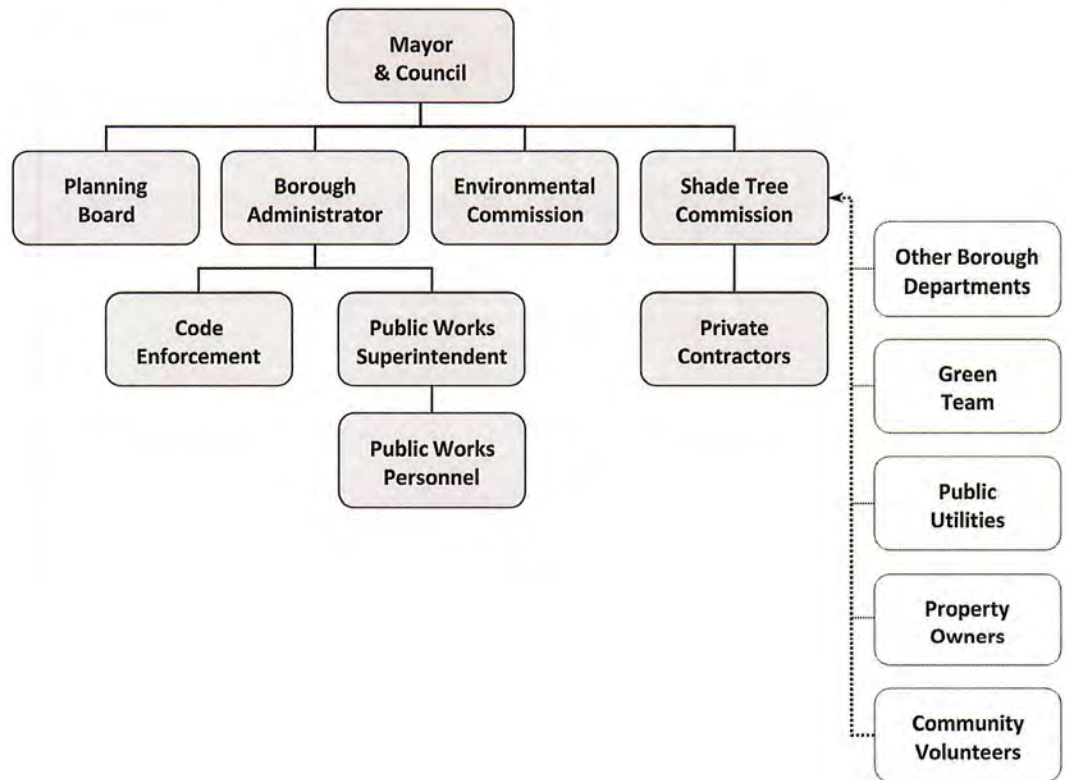
A color calibration bar featuring a series of color patches. From left to right, the patches are: a grayscale step wedge, followed by six color patches (yellow, cyan, magenta, red, green, and blue), and finally a series of six grayscale patches labeled 0%, 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100%.



COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM STRUCTURE

By ordinance, the Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission is primarily responsible for the management of public trees in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:64-1 et seq.

In day-to-day practice, administration of the Atlantic Highlands' Community Forestry Program is a cooperative effort between the Shade Tree Commission, the Mayor and Council, the Department of Public Works, and other Borough commissions, boards, departments, and internal and external groups, as follows:



COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

1. *Mayor & Council*

- a) The Mayor is responsible for appointing members to the Borough's various boards and commissions.
- b) The Mayor and Council have ultimate authority over the policies, procedures, and programs of the Community Forestry Program and are responsible for approving its budget.

2. *Planning Board*

- a) The Planning Board is responsible for implementing various elements of the Borough Code and Borough Master Plan that relate to site development and protection of natural resources.

3. *Environmental Commission*

- a) By ordinance, the Environmental Commission is empowered to:
 - i) Provide assistance and information for the protection, development or use of natural resources, including water resources, located within or abutting and affecting Atlantic Highlands.
 - ii) Conduct research into the use and possible use of the open land areas of the Borough and may coordinate with the activities of unofficial bodies organized for similar purposes, and may advertise, prepare, print, and distribute books, maps, charts, plans, and pamphlets necessary for its purposes.
 - iii) Create and maintain an index of all open areas, publicly or privately owned, including open marshlands, swamps, and other wetlands, in order to obtain information and make recommendations on the proper use of such areas and may recommend to the Planning Board plans and programs for inclusion in the Master Plans and the development and use of such areas.
 - iv) Study and make recommendations concerning open space preservation, water resources management, air pollution control, solid waste management, noise control, soil and landscape protection, environmental appearance, marine resources and protection of flora and fauna, and other environmentally related concerns. Studying and making recommendations concerning environmental appearances.
 - v) Subject to the approval and appropriate action of the governing body, acquire property, both real and personal, in the name of the Borough to maintain, improve, protect, limit the future use of, or otherwise conserve and properly utilize open spaces and other land and water areas within or adjacent to the Borough.

4. *Shade Tree Commission*

- a) The Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission is primarily responsible for the management of public tree resources in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands.
- b) The Shade Tree Commission is a fully empowered commission, established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:64-1.
- c) The Shade Tree Commission is comprised of five regular members and up to two alternate members.
- d) The Shade Tree Commission is vested with the powers as per N.J.S.A. 40:64-5, including:
 - i) To exercise full and exclusive control over the regulation, planting, and care of shade and ornamental trees now located or which may hereafter be planted in any public highway, park, or parkway, including the planting, trimming, spraying, care, and protection thereof.
 - ii) To regulate and control the use of the ground surrounding the same so far as may be necessary for their proper growth, care, and protection.
 - iii) To move or require the removal of any tree or part thereof on public or private property that is dangerous to public safety.
 - iv) To make, alter, amend, and repeal, in the manner prescribed for the passage, alteration, amendment and repeal of ordinances by the Borough Council, any and all ordinances necessary or proper for carrying out the provisions hereof.
 - v) To administer treatment to or remove any tree on public or private property which is believed to harbor a disease or insects readily communicable to neighboring healthy trees and to enter upon private property for that purpose, provided that the suspected condition is first properly confirmed.
 - vi) To study and recommend methods of funding, outside of municipal taxation, by grants and aid, both state and federal.
 - vii) To develop a program of tree planting and overall beautification in areas along the public right-of-way and to prepare a survey of existing trees within the public right-of-way and upon public property and to develop a master plan for the care and control of

existing shade trees and ornamental trees and the planting of new trees throughout the Borough, said survey and master plan shall be submitted to Borough Council for its review and approval annually, by February 1 of the next succeeding year.

- viii) To provide a procedure for removing or trimming existing trees where necessary because the tree is either dead, diseased, or injured by storm or similar consequences.
- ix) To adopt and administer regulations for the selection and placement of trees and as may be necessary for the interpretation, administration, and enforcement of the powers and authority of the Commission.

5. Borough Administrator

- a) The Borough Administrator serves as the Chief Executive Officer of the Borough and is responsible for carrying out the policies and directives of the Governing Body.
- b) The Borough Administrator is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Borough and coordinating the various municipal departments.

6. Department of Public Works

- a) The Department of Public Works assists in maintaining the public tree resources in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands.
- b) Specifically, the Department of Public Works is responsible for:
 - i) Limited removal of dead and hazardous trees.
 - ii) Limited tree pruning.
 - iii) Providing emergency response service, when necessary.
 - iv) Leaf and brush recycling.
 - v) Notifying the Shade Tree Commission of tree-related issues it identifies in the course of its day-to-day operations.
 - vi) Notifying the Shade Tree Commission of road and utility work that will impact municipal trees.

7. Tree Maintenance Contractors

- a) Private contractors are periodically hired by the Shade Tree Commission to prune, remove, and plant publicly controlled trees in the Borough.
- b) Contractors are, within the terms of their agreement, responsible for:
 - i) Completing all work to the specifications of the Borough in an efficient and safe manner.
 - ii) Following all current and accepted arboricultural standards and practices and abiding by all current and applicable safety standards relating to tree care operations.
 - iii) Reporting any tree-related hazards or other problems immediately to the Borough.

8. Green Team

- a) The Atlantic Highlands Green Team develops plans, implements programs and projects, and assists in educating the community to raise awareness and commitment to improving the environment and quality of life in the Borough.

9. Public Utilities

- a) Public utilities are responsible for minimizing conflicts between trees and their facilities.
- b) Specifically, public utilities and their contractors are responsible for:
 - i) Abiding by all applicable ordinances.
 - ii) Keeping the Borough informed of their work plans and schedules.
 - iii) Exercising reasonable diligence in the installation and maintenance of their facilities so as to avoid damage to public and private trees.

- iv) Not removing any tree without prior approval of the Borough or its owner.
- v) Following all current and accepted arboricultural standards and practices.

10. Property Owners

- a) Private property owners assist the Community Forestry Program to the extent that they:
 - i) Are, by ordinance, responsible for maintaining Borough-owned trees growing in the public right-of-way adjacent to their property.
 - ii) Are asked to irrigate and protect new trees planted adjacent to their properties.
 - iii) Are required to maintain and repair Borough sidewalks in a manner that prevents damage to Borough trees.
 - iv) Are encouraged to plant and properly care for trees on private property.

11. Community Volunteers

- a) Members of the Shade Tree Commission, Environmental Commission, and other related boards and committees are residents of the Borough and serve on a volunteer basis.

12. Other Borough Departments, Boards & Commissions

- a) Other Borough departments and boards assist the Community Forestry Program to the extent that they administer and implement Borough ordinances, policies, and procedures that directly or indirectly relate to the protection and management of public trees.

**CURRENT
ORDINANCES
& RESOLUTIONS**

The following portions of the Code of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands authorize or relate to the Borough's Community Forestry Program:

1. Chapter 150, *Development Regulations*, which contains various requirements relating to the protection of natural resources, protection of steep slopes, the preservation of existing trees during development, tree planting, and landscaping.
2. Chapter 340, *Trees*, which establishes the Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission, provides for the planting and protection of public trees, and delegates maintenance of street trees to the adjacent property owner (*see appendix*).
3. Chapter 306, *Stormwater Control* and Chapter 311, *Stormwater Management* which establish policies and detail requirements and recommendations to minimize the impact of stormwater runoff on water quality, reduce the quantity of water directed into water bodies, and maintain groundwater recharge.

**TREE SERVICE
REQUEST
PROCEDURES**

Currently, private property owners are responsible for maintaining Borough-owned trees growing within the right-of-way adjacent to their property, subject to the authority of the Shade Tree Commission.

As a result, property owners that contact the Borough requesting maintenance or removal of street trees are informed of their responsibility and that they must contract with a private tree service to complete the necessary work. Borough-owned trees may only be removed when permission is granted by the Shade Tree Commission.

Should a property owner fail to complete work that is necessary to preserve public safety, the Department of Public works or their contractor may complete the work and charge the cost back to the owner.

Service requests relating to trees in Borough parks, on Borough-owned properties, and along certain street frontages are directed to and completed by the Department of Public Works or its contractors.

**2020 – 2024
OBJECTIVES**

1. Ongoing Administrative Programs

a) 2020 – 2024

- i) Continue implementing all administrative programs, policies, and procedures already in effect.

2. Ordinance Review

a) April – June 2020

- i) Review Chapter 340, *Trees* of the Borough Code regarding its effectiveness in avoiding the indiscriminate removal of public trees, ensuring their proper maintenance by adjacent property owners, and ensuring replacement plantings for trees removed, where appropriate.
- ii) Identify key deficiencies and/or inadequate enforcement relating to current concerns over unnecessary tree removal.
- iii) In particular, include requirements for a NJ Licensed Tree Expert's evaluation of the condition of existing trees prior to the design of road improvements projects and consideration of design alternatives and construction processes for preserving and protecting existing trees, when warranted.

b) July – September 2020

- i) Draft appropriate revisions to Chapter 340 with the ongoing review and input of all relating bodies including the Shade Tree Commission, the Borough Engineer, the Department of Public Works, the Borough Attorney, and others.

c) October – December 2020

- i) Submit the code revisions for review and adoption by the Mayor and Council.

3. Review of Community Forestry Program Policies and Procedures

a) January – March 2021

- i) Working in cooperation with the Mayor and Council, the Shade Tree Commission, the Department of Public Works, and others as may be appropriate, review and clarify the various complementary roles each has in the long-term planning, policy development, and day-to-day operation of Atlantic Highlands' Community Forestry Program. The purpose of this effort will be to formalize operating procedures and criteria for day-to-day decision making. This, in turn, will help improve program efficiency and long-term consistency within the Program.
- ii) Identify key aspects of long-term planning and day-to-day operations that require review and formalized policies and procedures. These may include:
 - Handling of service requests from property owners.
 - Given property owner responsibility for maintaining Borough street trees, procedures for notifying property owners when maintenance needs are identified and ensuring its completion.
 - Criteria for granting permission for tree removal (e.g. specific circumstances that justify removal of live "nuisance" trees).
 - Utility pruning (e.g. Borough notification and supervision)
 - Sidewalk repair to avoid tree injury.
 - Root intrusion into sewers.
 - Species selection criteria.
 - Reviewing and commenting on development applications before the Planning Board and construction permits as they relate to tree planting and protection.

- b) *April – September 2021*
 - i) Develop appropriate policies and procedures for each of the items identified with the input of all appropriate departments, boards, committees, the Mayor and Council, and others, as appropriate.
 - ii) Begin compiling the resulting policies and procedures into a Community Forestry Program Policy Manual.
- c) *October – December 2021*
 - i) Finalize and distribute the final Community Forestry Program Policy Manual to all appropriate departments, boards, committees, and individuals involved in the Community Forestry Program's operation.



Budget & Resources

OVERVIEW

The following is a summary of the resources available to Atlantic Highlands' Community Forestry Program on a per-year average over the past five years.

Objectives contained within this plan may require resources beyond those currently available. The Borough's ability to fully satisfy these objectives may be dependent upon its ability to secure additional funding through external sources and grant programs.

PREVIOUS GRANTS RECEIVED

During the 2015 – 2019 management period, the Borough of Atlantic Highlands received the following grants to assist its Community Forestry Program:

1. A \$3,000 Green Communities Grant from the NJ Forest Service to help fund development of this Community Forestry Management Plan.

EMPLOYEE SALARY & WAGES

Borough Administrator
Borough Clerk
Department of Public Works personnel

*Subtotal (total salary and benefits prorated by
percent of time dedicated to the Community Forestry Program)* **\$55,000.00**

OPERATIONS

Contracted tree pruning, removal, and stump grinding
Materials and supplies
Printing and distribution of public education materials
Training & professional development
Memberships & subscriptions
Other miscellaneous operating expenses

Subtotal **\$6,500.00**

BOROUGH EQUIPMENT

(1) 25' bucket truck
(1) front end loader
(1) backhoe
29-yard packer truck for leaf pick up
(1) dump truck
Various mason dump and pickup trucks
Chain saws, blowers, and other power equipment
Traffic control signs and cones
Personal protective equipment

*Subtotal (estimated annual value based on
value amortized over 5-15 year service life,
plus annual maintenance, etc. and
prorated by percent of time used by the
Community Forestry Program)* **\$56,000.00**

TREE PLANTING	Contracted tree supply and planting	
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$5,200.00</i>
TREE WASTE RECYCLING	Collection and disposal of leaves and woodchips Wood disposal at commercial recycling facility	
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>\$15,000.00</i>
VOLUNTEER SERVICES	Shade Tree Commission members Environmental Commission members Other community volunteers	
	<i>Subtotal (440 hours per year average @ \$27.20)</i>	<i>\$11,968.00</i>
TOTALS	<i>Borough Resources</i>	<i>\$137,700.00</i>
	<i>Value of Volunteer Services</i>	<i>\$11,968.00</i>



Training & Professional Development

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. Provide individuals within the Shade Tree Program with sufficient knowledge to make effective management decisions.
2. Ensure that tree inspections and hazard evaluations follow accepted standard procedures and that the results are objective, technically correct and consistent.
3. Ensure continuity in the overall level of knowledge and expertise within the Shade Tree Program as individuals leave the Program and new ones join.
4. Ensure that all tree maintenance and planting projects and tasks are planned and completed properly, in accordance with the latest scientific knowledge and current industry standards.
5. Satisfy the requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act, Training Skills & Accreditation Program without interruption.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. ***Training Provisions & Funding***
 - a) Training and professional development opportunities in arboriculture and urban forestry continue to be made available to volunteers and employees serving the Borough's Community Forestry Program.
 - b) The cost of training is funded by the trainee's respective commission, department, or organization.
2. ***NJ Community Forestry's Training Skills & Accreditation Program***
 - a) At the time this plan was prepared, the following had satisfied the CORE Training requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act:
 - i) (1) Borough employee
 - ii) (6) Community Forestry Program volunteers
 - iii) (0) Elected officials
 - b) Community Forestry Program volunteers and Borough employees acquired continuing education units by attending a wide range of training programs offered through the U.S. Forest Service's Urban Forest Connections webinar series, Rutgers University, the NJ Shade Tree Federation, the New Jersey Tree Foundation, First Energy / JCP&L, Monmouth County, and others.
 - c) Over the past several years, Community Forestry Program participants attended training sessions covering a broad range of relevant topics, including:
 - i) Tree species selection and planting.
 - ii) Tree benefits.
 - iii) Emerald ash borer.
 - iv) Spotted lanternfly.
 - v) Establishing municipal tree canopy goals.
 - vi) Mitigating heat island effects.
 - vii) Successfully applying for grants.
 - viii) iTree software tools.

- ix) Tree species identification.
- x) Tree hazard identification.

CURRENT TRAINING NEEDS

The Borough has evaluated its existing programs and personnel and identified the following areas in which training is currently needed or should be considered.

1. NJ Community Forestry CORE Training for volunteers and Borough employees.
2. Tree hazard identification and evaluation for Shade Tree Commission members and Department of Public Works employees.
3. Tree species identification for Shade Tree Commission members and Department of Public Works employees.
4. Young tree structural pruning in accordance with ANSI A300 Standards for encouraging the development of structurally sound and non-conflicting branch structure in young trees for Department of Public Works personnel, Shade Tree Commission members, and local tree maintenance contractors.
5. Tree worker safety for Department of Public Works employees covering chain saw safety, first aid and CPR, electrical hazard awareness, and aerial rescue.

2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. ***Ongoing Training Programs***
 - a) ***2020 – 2024***
 - i) Continue implementing the existing programs, policies, and procedures listed above consistently and in a manner that maximizes the number of individuals who increase their level of expertise.
 - ii) Attend training programs, in addition to the following objectives, that address the Current Training Needs listed above as appropriate programs become available.
2. ***NJ Community Forestry's Training Skills & Accreditation Program***
 - a) ***January – March, Annually***
 - i) Review training needs versus upcoming training opportunities.
 - ii) Ensure that the Borough will accumulate the necessary continuing education credits as required under the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act by the end of each year.
 - iii) Schedule NJ Community Forestry CORE Training for additional individuals, as necessary to maintain compliance with New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act requirements.
 - b) ***January – December 2021***
 - i) Obtain NJ Community Forestry CORE Training for at least one Department of Public Works or other appropriate Borough employee.
3. ***Tree Species Identification***
 - a) ***January – December 2021***
 - i) Organize and conduct an in-house class for Shade Tree Commission members, Department of Public Works employees, and interested residents in the identification of native and exotic tree species common to the Borough and surrounding areas.

4. *Tree Worker Safety Training*

a) *January – December 2022*

- i) Train all Department of Public Works personnel that complete tree maintenance work in Tree Worker Safety, including chain saw safety, first aid and CPR, electrical hazard awareness, and aerial rescue, via a formal training program taught by appropriately certified instructors, such as the NJ Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture.

5. *Tree Hazard Identification and Evaluation Training*

a) *January – December 2023*

- i) Train at least one Shade Tree Commission member and at least one Department of Public Works employee in identifying and evaluating the severity of potential tree hazards using the latest information and techniques through an advanced level seminar. This training should include methods for detecting and evaluating the extent of internal decay.

6. *Young Tree Structural Pruning Training*

a) *January – December 2024*

- i) Train at least two Department of Public Works employees, at least two Shade Tree Commission members, and local contractors in specialized shade tree pruning techniques at an in-depth, hands on program that emphasizes developmental pruning for young trees in accordance with ANSI A300 standards to promote the development of a structurally sound trunk and crown form, minimize conflicts with roads and utilities, and minimize the need for severe pruning as the trees mature.



Public Education, Awareness, & Outreach

PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS, & OUTREACH GOALS

1. Increase and maintain public interest and support for Atlantic Highlands' Community Forestry Program.
2. Encourage the public's assistance in promoting and implementing various programs, protecting trees, and beautifying the Borough.
3. Encourage the planting, protection, and proper care of trees on private property for the benefit of the entire community.
4. Educate citizens in the value of environmental stewardship.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. **Arbor Day**
 - a) Formal Arbor Day celebrations continue to be held annually in Atlantic Highlands.
 - b) Arbor Day programs have been the cooperative effort of the Mayor and Council, the Shade Tree Commission, and local schools.
 - c) Recent Arbor Day activities have included tree planting ceremonies, poster contests, library presentations, and distribution of tree seedlings.
2. **Tree City USA**
 - a) Atlantic Highlands has received the Tree City USA designation from the National Arbor Day Foundation for 39 consecutive years.
 - b) During this time, the Borough has also received 8 Tree City USA Growth Awards.
 - c) The Tree City USA designation is proudly displayed on signs throughout the Borough and on all Shade Tree Commission materials.
3. **Press Releases**
 - a) Press releases relating to Community Forestry Program events and tree-related matters are distributed to local media when appropriate, multiple times per year.
4. **Public Relations Materials**
 - a) The Shade Tree Commission has developed a wide range of materials and methods for distributing information about the Community Forestry Program's policies and activities, and the benefits of trees, including:
 - i) A Shade Tree Commission page on the Borough's official website, www.ahnj.com, with an overview of its programs and policies, events, relevant ordinances, forms for requesting tree planting and maintenance, contact information, and more.
 - ii) A popular Facebook page that to which new content is frequently added.
 - iii) A professionally printed rack-card outlining the Commission's mission, the benefits of trees, and a form for requesting a tree be planted.
 - iv) Downloadable application and donation forms for the Trees for Tomorrow Fund and the Tribute Trees planting programs.
 - v) An annual Stakeholders meeting which is open to the public and features compelling speakers.

**2020 – 2024
OBJECTIVES**

- vi) A multiple-page printed newsletter that was mailed to every property owner in the Borough in 2017.
- vii) Representation at various community events including the Farmer's Market, Atlantic Highlands Historical Society Flea Market, Classic Car Show, and Taste of Atlantic Highlands.
- viii) Various occasional programs, such as a "My Favorite Tree" photo contest in 2016.

1. Ongoing Public Education, Awareness, & Outreach Programs

a) 2020 – 2024

- i) Continue all existing public education, awareness, and outreach programs, as appropriate.

2. Annual Arbor Day Programs

a) January – April, Annually

- i) Continue to organize and conduct annual Arbor Day celebrations.
 - Seek assistance from the Board of Education as well as local civic groups, local businesses, and others to help spread the workload and maximize exposure and attendance at the programs.
 - Vary the location, activities, and target audience each year to help increase interest and support for the Borough's Community Forestry Program, awareness of the benefits of trees, and active environmental stewardship.

3. Tree City USA

a) October – December, Annually

- i) Continue to submit the annual application for designation as a Tree City USA through the National Arbor Day Foundation.
- ii) Prepare and submit the application for Tree City USA Growth Awards when eligibility requirements have been met.
- iii) Continue to advertise the designation in public relations materials (road signs, plaques, truck decals, stationary logo, etc.) throughout the community.

4. Press Releases & Educational Materials

a) 2020 – 2024

- i) Ensure that information on the Shade Tree Commission webpage is kept current and complete, and that educational content it provides is refreshed regularly.
- ii) Continue to issue at least 3 press releases per year covering activities and accomplishments of the Community Forestry Program, current tree health concerns, requests for donations to the Trees for Tomorrow fund, and other timely topics.
- iii) Produce at least one new promotional piece or educational article per year to be included on the Shade Tree Commission webpage and/or distributed in hardcopy at Borough buildings and community events. Articles may be available reprints of articles from various sources, such as the International Society of Arboriculture, the National Arbor Foundation, the NJ Community Forestry Program, etc., or produced in-house. Applicable subjects may include:
 - Trees for Tomorrow fund.
 - The environmental, social, and economic benefits of trees to the community.
 - Calls for volunteers.
 - Community Forestry Program services, policies, and property owner requirements.

- Community Forestry Program awards (e.g. grants received, Tree City USA, etc.).
- Community Forestry Program events and projects (e.g. Arbor Day programs, adoption of this Community Forestry Management Plan, training completed, planting and pruning projects, etc.).
- General tree maintenance tips for private homeowners (e.g. species selection, proper pruning and other maintenance techniques, how to select a professional tree maintenance firm, etc.).
- Selecting and planting trees on private property.
- Issues with planting exotic invasive species and species to avoid.
- Proper mulching and avoiding root collar damage.
- Timely tree health concerns (emerald ash borer, spotted lanternfly, summer shedding of bark on London plane and sycamore, Asian Longhorn beetle, bacterial leaf scorch of oak, hemlock woolly adelgid, etc.) and recommendations for treatment.
- Measures for protecting trees during construction.
- The hazards of cutting roots during sidewalk repair and alternative methods to consider.
- Causes and remedies for root intrusion into sewers.



Tree Inventory & Assessment

TREE INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT GOALS

1. Provide accurate and updatable baseline information necessary for making sound management decisions and upon which proactive short and long-term management programs can be based.
2. Provide a system for accessing and utilizing inventory data that improves the efficiency and effectiveness of day-to-day tree management activities.
3. Track management activities and evaluate their long-term impact on the tree population and progress toward the overall goals and objectives of the Community Forestry Program.
4. Maintain records of maintenance for individual trees, where appropriate.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. ***Current Tree Inventory + Assessment***
 - a) In 2017, Richview Consulting was retained to conduct a partial inventory of street trees throughout the Borough. Data was collected into an *i-Tree Streets* database and a variety of preliminary summary reports characterizing the current street tree population and the benefits it provides to the community were generated. A summary of the findings of the partial street tree inventory is provided on page 7.
 - b) At this time, the Borough lacks an inventory an assessment of trees it manages in Borough parks and on Borough properties.

2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. ***Ongoing Tree Inventory Programs***
 - a) ***2020 – 2024***
 - i) Continue utilizing existing information about the street tree population to facilitate day-to-day operations, evaluate the state of the street tree resource, and direct efforts toward the Overall Program Goals.
2. ***Street Tree Inventory Completion***
 - a) ***October 2022 – March 2023***
 - i) Develop plans to complete the street tree inventory begun in 2017.
 - ii) Completion of the street tree inventory is dependent upon securing the necessary funding to hire a qualified NJ Licensed Tree Expert.
 - Prepare cost estimates for completing the remaining streets in the same manner as those completed in 2017 and merging the existing data with the newly collected data.
 - Submit a request to the Mayor and Council with appropriate justification for the funding.
 - Identify and apply for available grant funding.
 - b) ***April – June 2023***
 - i) Complete inventory data collection on the remaining streets, merge the new data with the existing 2017 data, and produce various summary reports characterizing the street tree population and existing planting and maintenance needs.

c) *July – September 2023*

- i) Begin integrating the inventory findings into ongoing planning decisions and daily management activities.
- ii) Begin completing, or directing responsible property owners to complete, all maintenance work identified during the inventory in order of priority, based on potentially hazardous conditions noted.
- iii) If feasible, develop procedures for continually updating the inventory as existing trees are removed and new trees are planted.



TREE HAZARD MANAGEMENT GOALS

1. Minimize the risk of trees to public safety.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. ***Tree Hazard Identification***

- a) Potentially hazardous tree conditions are currently identified via:
 - i) Adjacent property owners who are ultimately responsible for maintaining Borough street trees in a safe condition.
 - ii) The Code Enforcement Official, who is responsible for notifying property owners of the need to correct potentially hazardous conditions, when noted.
 - iii) Ongoing observations by the Shade Tree Commission, the Department of Public Works, and other Borough employees in the course of their daily activities.

2. ***Tree Hazard Abatement***

- a) In the case of street trees, adjacent property owners are currently responsible for correcting hazardous conditions on their own, or upon notice from the Borough.
- b) Certain emergency work, such as clearing roads of downed trees, is completed by the Department of Public Works or its contractors.
- c) Maintenance of potentially hazardous trees in Borough parks, on Borough properties, and along certain road frontages is completed by the Department of Public Works or private contractors retained by the Borough.

2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. ***Ongoing Tree Hazard Management Programs***

- a) ***2020 – 2024***
 - i) Continue to implement all existing tree hazard management programs, policies, and procedures.
 - ii) Continue to address hazard abatement needs as they are identified in order of priority.

2. ***Tree Hazard Evaluation Training***

- a) *See Training & Professional Development, Objective #5.*



TREE PLANTING GOALS

1. Increase and perpetuate the Borough's public tree populations at maximum practical stocking (the total number of shade trees that is appropriate and which the Borough can effectively manage, given available resources).
2. Optimize and maintain tree species and age diversity to provide long-term stability in the public tree population.
3. Minimize future maintenance needs and costs.
4. Minimize conflicts between trees and sidewalks, utilities, and other public and private fixtures.
5. Improve aesthetic appeal, seasonal variation, and physical benefits to adjacent properties and the Borough overall.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. ***Planting Jurisdiction***
 - a) The Borough currently plants trees:
 - i) In Borough rights-of-way
 - ii) On Borough-owned properties
 - iii) On private property with the property owner's written acceptance of all future responsibility for the tree.
2. ***Planting vs. Removal Ratio***
 - a) In recent years, the Borough has planted an average of 16 trees per year.
 - b) Over this same period, the Borough has removed an average of 24 trees per year.
 - c) As a result of this planting versus removal ratio, stocking of the Borough's public tree resource has slowly but steadily decreased over the past 10 years and is in need of increased planting to ensure that canopy cover is adequately perpetuated and tree canopy cover goals are met.
3. ***Planting Location & Tree Placement***
 - a) Planting locations are identified via:
 - i) Vacancies created by the removal of dead or hazardous trees.
 - ii) Requests for street trees by adjacent property owners.
 - iii) Observations by the Shade Tree Commission.
 - b) Tree placement is determined and marked prior to planting by the Shade Tree Commission in cooperation with the Department of Public Works and, where appropriate, the adjacent property owner. Trees are placed:
 - i) Within the right-of-way in the case of street trees.
 - ii) In a manner that will minimize future conflicts with above and below-ground utilities, structures, hardscape fixtures, and traffic.
 - iii) In a manner that is appropriate for the design and intended use of the area.
4. ***Species Selection***
 - a) Species are selected by the Shade Tree Commission after reviewing the site.

- b) Species are selected with consideration to:
 - i) Existing soil conditions, available growing space, and above and below-ground restrictions at each site.
 - ii) Goals for increasing species diversity in the street tree population.
 - iii) Insect and disease resistance.
 - iv) Availability of species and cultivars.

5. *Tree Supply & Installation*

- a) Trees planted onto public lands are typically furnished and planted by a private contractor retained by the Shade Tree Commission.
- b) Homeowners are permitted to plant street trees only after receiving approval from the Borough.

6. *Post-Planting Care*

- a) Post-planting maintenance for new street trees includes:
 - i) Watering and protection by adjacent property owners or teams of volunteers coordinated by the Shade Tree Commission.
 - ii) Removal of stakes by the Department of Public Works or the adjacent property owner.

7. *Funding & Sources*

- a) The cost of public tree planting is typically funded by the Shade Tree Commission budget, which has been limited and static for the past several years.
- b) The Borough established a "Trees for Tomorrow Fund" through which residents, businesses, and local organizations can contribute to the purchase and planting of public trees in Atlantic Highlands. The program was advertised via the Shade Tree Commission web and Facebook pages and donation envelopes were produced and made available at various locations. During this current five-year management period, the Shade Tree Commission will develop and implement methods of advertising and increasing participation in the program.
- c) The Borough established a "Tribute Trees" program through which individuals may request and donate the planting of a tree at various locations in the Borough in memory or honor of current or former Borough Officials, Borough Employees, or members of Borough Committees and organizations.

**2020 – 2024
OBJECTIVES**

1. *Ongoing Tree Planting Programs*

- a) *2020 – 2024*
 - i) Continue implementing all existing tree planting programs where appropriate and with changes dictated by the following objectives.

2. *Annual Tree Planting Program Funding*

- a) *October – December, annually*
 - i) Continue to stress to the Mayor and Council the critical importance of consistent annual replanting to increase and perpetuate the Borough's public tree population and canopy cover.
 - ii) Support annual budget requests with the results of the street tree inventory once it is complete, lists of tree planting requests from Borough residents, lists of vacant planting sites (if identified), and documentation of the benefits of trees in reducing energy consumption and improving air quality.
 - iii) Develop and implement advertising methods for increasing awareness and participation in the Shade Tree Commission's Trees for Tomorrow initiative in advance of the spring

planting season to increase available funding for new and replacement tree planting. Effective methods may include direct mailing or piggyback mailings with other Borough correspondence to Borough residents and businesses, increased mentions on the Shade Tree Commission's Facebook page and webpage, applications handouts at community events, etc.

- iv) Investigate the availability of New Jersey Community Forestry *Community Stewardship Incentive Program* (CSIP) grants, as well as other community development, transportation, and similar grant programs, for funding Borough tree planting projects.
- v) When available, apply for grant funding to supplement the Borough's tree planting budget.



TREE MAINTENANCE GOALS

1. Improve and maintain the long-term health and structural condition of the Borough's public tree population.
2. Maximize the service life of existing trees.
3. Minimize the risk of trees to public safety.
4. Respond promptly and effectively to citizen complaints and service requests.
5. Maximize the benefits that trees provide to the community relative to the cost of maintaining them.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. *In-House Crews*

- a) The Borough currently lacks an in-house crew that is fully dedicated to tree maintenance.
- b) Department of Public Works personnel occasionally perform limited tree pruning, tree removal, and emergency tree work.
- c) Department of Public Works personnel currently complete approximately:
 - i) 60% of all tree removal work
 - ii) 60% of all tree pruning work
 - iii) 0% of all stump removal work
 - iv) 60% of all emergency tree work
- d) The Department of Public Works is currently equipped with the following for tree maintenance:
 - i) (1) 25' bucket truck
 - ii) (1) front end loader
 - iii) (1) backhoe
 - iv) 29-yard packer truck for leaf pick up
 - v) (1) dump truck
 - vi) Various mason dump and pickup trucks
 - vii) Chain saws, blowers, and other power equipment
 - viii) Traffic control signs and cones
 - ix) Personal protective equipment

2. *Private Contractors*

- a) Private tree maintenance firms are periodically hired from a list of Borough-approved vendors by the Department of Public Works or the Shade Tree Commission to complete tree removal, tree pruning, and stump grinding.
- b) Local tree maintenance contractors remain on-call to complete emergency tree work when necessary.

3. *Inter-Local & Mutual Assistance Agreements*

- a) Atlantic Highlands currently does not have formal agreements with neighboring municipalities for the sharing of tree-related equipment and personnel.

4. *Systematic Maintenance Programs*

- a) The Borough currently does not have a systematic program for pruning or otherwise treating trees on a fixed schedule.

5. *Work Identification, Prioritization & Scheduling*

- a) Except for trees along certain road frontages, individual property owners are responsible for maintaining public street trees adjacent to their property.
 - i) Based on the ongoing observations of the Shade Tree Commission, the results of the 2017 partial street tree inventory, and observations made in conjunction with the preparation of this Community Forestry Management Plan, it appears that many trees are not being adequately maintained.
 - ii) It is the impression of the Shade Tree Commission that many property owners are not aware of their responsibilities for maintaining the public street trees or what that maintenance should entail.
- b) When critical street tree maintenance needs are identified by the Borough, official notice is delivered to the adjacent property owner. If they fail to act, the Department of Public Works or their contractor may complete the work with the cost charged back to the property owner.
- c) Maintenance needs for street trees along certain road frontages, trees in Borough parks, and trees on Borough properties are identified by Department of Public Works personnel and/or Shade Tree Commission members in the course of their ongoing activities.

6. *Tree Removal*

- a) It is the Borough's policy to not remove live public trees unless they pose a threat to public safety.
- b) While adjacent property owners are responsible for maintaining street trees, they may not remove trees without approval from the Shade Tree Commission.
- c) Over the past five years, the Borough has removed an average of 24 dead, dying, diseased, and/or structurally unsound trees per year.

7. *Plant Health Care & Specialty Treatments*

- a) The Borough generally does not complete health care and specialty treatments on public trees.

8. *Sidewalk Maintenance*

- a) Currently, adjacent property owners are responsible for maintaining sidewalks in the public right-of-way, including repairing or replacing them when damaged by Borough trees.
- b) The Borough selects species and places street trees in a manner that will minimize future conflicts between trees and sidewalks.

9. *Funding*

- a) The Department of Public Works budget typically covers the cost of tree maintenance work completed by private contractors. Occasionally, projects are undertaken and paid from the Shade Tree Commission's budget.
- b) The Department of Public Works operating budget typically covers the cost of tree maintenance work completed by its personnel.

**2020 – 2024
OBJECTIVES**

1. *Ongoing Tree Maintenance Programs*

a) *2020 – 2024*

- i) Continue implementing all existing tree maintenance programs, policies, and procedures on a regular basis.

2. *Priority Maintenance Work*

a) *July – September 2023*

- i) Upon completion of the street tree inventory, organize work lists of high priority tree maintenance needs identified, notify property owners of work they are responsible for, and develop cost estimates for completing work the Borough is responsible for.
- ii) As necessary, seek and secure funding from the Mayor and Council, grant opportunities, and/or other sources for completing the work.

b) *October 2023 – June 2024*

- i) Ensure completion of all high priority work identified by the street tree inventory.



Tree Waste Recycling

TREE WASTE RECYCLING GOALS

1. Minimize the cost of tree waste disposal to the Borough.
2. Provide beneficial recycled products for use on Borough properties and by Borough residents.
3. Generate income that can be used to subsidize various community forestry programs.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. ***Recycling Facilities***
 - a) The Borough currently does not own and operate facilities for recycling vegetative waste.
2. ***Material Processing, Use & Distribution***
 - a) ***Leaves***
 - i) The Borough currently provides curbside leaf and brush pick-up service for Borough residents several times per year.
 - ii) Collected leaves and brush are delivered to the Township of Middletown, which operates a NJDEP licensed facility for vegetative composting and recycling.
 - b) ***Wood Chips***
 - i) Woodchips accumulated by the Borough are delivered to Middletown Township's recycling facility for recycling into mulch and various other waste wood products.
 - ii) Wood chips generated by private contractors working for the Borough are removed and recycled by the contractor.
 - c) ***Bulk Wood***
 - i) Bulk wood generated by Borough crews is delivered to Middletown Township's recycling facility for processing into mulch and various other waste wood products.
 - ii) Bulk wood generated by private contractors is removed and recycled by the contractor.
3. ***Recycling Income***
 - a) Currently, the Borough does not generate income through its tree waste recycling program.

2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. ***Ongoing Tree Waste Recycling Programs***
 - a) ***2020 – 2024***
 - i) Continue implementing all existing tree waste recycling programs, policies, and procedures.



TREE CARE DISASTER PLAN GOALS

1. Minimize the risk of catastrophic tree damage caused by weather, disease, and other forces.
2. Enable the Borough to respond to tree-related emergencies promptly and efficiently.
3. Provide the Borough with a viable plan and resources to repair or replace widespread tree damage or losses.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. *Tree Emergency & Disaster Threats*

- a) Severe weather is currently considered to be the most serious threat to the Borough's urban forest. In recent years, severe storms have caused significant damage to both public and privately-owned trees in Atlantic Highlands and throughout New Jersey.
- b) In addition to the threat to the trees themselves, the widespread structural failure of tree failures poses a serious threat to electrical service, communications, and the Borough's ability to provide critical emergency services.
- c) The risk of widespread tree damage and losses to biotic threats is currently considered moderate, but manageable, through increased species diversity and cultivar selection. Currently, there is particular concern regarding:
 - i) Bacterial leaf scorch of oaks, which has caused serious degradation and loss of trees in throughout southern and central New Jersey.
 - ii) Emerald ash borer, which is now present throughout New Jersey. Based on the results of the 2017 partial street tree inventory, however, it appears that the Borough's public tree population contains a small number of ash trees.
 - iii) Spotted lanternfly, which has heavily infested eastern Pennsylvania and was recently identified and triggered quarantines in Warren, Hunterdon, and Mercer Counties.

2. *Wildfire Protection*

- a) Wildfire is not considered to be a significant threat to public tree resources in the Borough of Atlantic Highlands at this time.

3. *Existing Emergency & Disaster Plans*

- a) The Borough's State-mandated Emergency Operations Plan outlines procedures for vital services and cooperative efforts between all Borough departments and neighboring communities during an emergency or disaster.
- b) The Borough currently lacks a formal plan specific to the repair and replacement of widespread tree damage and losses beyond initial emergency response efforts. It is believed, however, that technically sound and responsible planting, preventive maintenance, and hazard identification and abatement efforts described elsewhere in this plan will, over the long term, help reduce the Borough's vulnerability to catastrophic losses.

4. *Emergency Response*

- a) The Department of Public Works, in cooperation with the Office of Emergency Management, local utilities, and contractors, is responsible for clearing trees and debris to open roadways and permit restoration of electrical service and communications.

- b) The Department of Public Works and Borough contractors are on 24-hour call to respond to tree-related emergencies.

**2020 – 2024
OBJECTIVES**

1. *Ongoing Programs*

a) *2020 – 2024*

- i) Continue implementing existing programs, policies, and procedures.
- ii) Implement or expand technically sound and responsible planting, preventive maintenance and hazard identification and abatement programs, as detailed elsewhere in this plan, to reduce the risk of future tree failures.



Plan Preparation & Evaluation

PLAN PREPARATION & EVALUATION GOALS

1. Continue to follow a well-defined, consistent, and efficient course of action toward the Overall Program Goals.
2. Continually evaluate the success of past programs and activities and make effective adjustments to address changing needs and conditions.
3. Remain in compliance with and eligible for the benefits of the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act.

EXISTING PROGRAMS, POLICIES, & PROCEDURES

1. Preparation of this fourth five-year Community Forestry Management Plan was the cooperative effort of the Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission and their consulting arborist.
2. Goals and objectives contained in this Community Forestry Management Plan are based on the Borough's implementation of its 2000 through 2019 plans and ongoing review and evaluation of its progress.
3. Preparation of this Plan was made possible through a Green Communities Challenge Grant from the New Jersey Forest Service and the in-kind services of Borough volunteers and employees.

2020 – 2024 OBJECTIVES

1. **Annual Program Evaluation**
 - a) *December, Annually*
 - i) Evaluate the success of the year's activities and accomplishments relative to the goals and objectives contained within this plan.
 - ii) Adjust programs and procedures, as necessary, based upon the evaluation.
 - iii) Prepare and submit the Annual Accomplishment Report to the New Jersey Forest Service in accordance with the requirements of the New Jersey Shade Tree & Community Forestry Assistance Act.
2. **Five-Year Evaluation**
 - a) *January – March 2024*
 - i) Evaluate the success of all objectives completed to date.
 - ii) Evaluate progress toward the overall goals of the Shade Tree Program.
 - iii) Begin formulating new objectives and adjustments to existing policies, programs and procedures, if necessary, to address changing needs for the 2025 – 2029 management period.
3. **2025 – 2029 Management Plan Development**
 - a) *April – September 2024*
 - i) Finalize new objectives and adjustments to existing programs, policies, and procedures for the 2025 – 2029 management period.
 - ii) Prepare and submit a Community Forestry Management Plan for the 2025 – 2029 management period.
 - b) *October – December 2024*
 - i) Obtain plan approval from the New Jersey Community Forestry Council.



Summary of 2020 – 2024 Objectives

Objectives / Tasks	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION					
1. <i>Ongoing Administrative Programs</i>					
☐ Continue all existing administrative programs, policies, and procedures already in effect (p.23, #1.a.i)					
2. <i>Ordinance Review</i>					
☐ Review Chapter 340 of the Borough Code to evaluate its effectiveness in avoiding indiscriminate tree removal, ensuring proper maintenance of trees by adjacent property owners, and ensuring replacement of trees removed; Identify key deficiencies and enforcement issues; Develop requirements for a NJ Licensed Tree Expert's evaluation of existing trees during the design of road improvement projects and consideration of design alternatives to preserve and protect viable trees (p.23, #2.a.i-iii)					
☐ Draft appropriate revisions to Chapter 340 with the ongoing review and input of all appropriate parties (p.23, #2.b.i)					
☐ Submit the code revisions for review and adoption by the Mayor and Council (p.23, #2.c.i)					
3. <i>Review of Community Forestry Program Policies & Procedures</i>					
☐ In cooperation with all appropriate parties, review and clarify the role and responsibilities of all involved commissions, departments, and other groups in the Community Forestry Program; Identify key aspects of long-term planning and day-to-day operations that require review and formalized policies and procedures (p.23, #3.a.i-ii)					
☐ Develop appropriate policies and procedures for each item identified; Begin compiling the resulting policies and procedures into a Community Forestry Program Policy Manual (p.24, #3.b.i-ii)					
☐ Finalize and the distribute the Community Forestry Program Manual to all appropriate departments, boards, committees, and individuals involved the Borough's Community Forestry Program's operation (p.24, #3.c.i)					
TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT					
1. <i>Ongoing Training Programs</i>					
☐ Continue all existing training programs on a regular basis and maximize the number of individuals that increase their level of practical knowledge; Attend training programs in addition to the following objectives that address current training needs as appropriate programs become available (p.28, #1.a.i-ii)					

Objectives / Tasks	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, cont'd					
2. <i>NJ Community Forestry Training Skills & Accreditation Program</i>					
☐ Review training needs and schedule training, as necessary, to accumulate sufficient CEU's and maintain Approved Status; Schedule individuals for CORE Training, as necessary (p.24, #2.a.i-iii)					
☐ Obtain NJ Community Forestry CORE Training for at least 1 Department of Public Works or other appropriate Borough employee (p.28, #2.b.i)					
3. <i>Tree Species Identification Training</i>					
☐ Organize and conduct an in-house class for Shade Tree Commission members, Department of Public Works employees, and interested residents in the identification of native and exotic tree species common to the Borough and surrounding area (p.28, #3.a.i)					
4. <i>Tree Worker Safety Training</i>					
☐ Train all Department of Public Works personnel that complete tree maintenance work in related safety issues including chainsaw safety, first aid and CPR, electrical hazard awareness, and aerial rescue via a formal training program taught by appropriately certified instructors, such as the NJ Committee for the Advancement of Arboriculture (p.29, #4.a.i)					
5. <i>Tree Hazard Identification & Evaluation Training</i>					
☐ Train at least 1 Shade Tree Commission member and at least 1 Department of Public Works employee in identifying and evaluating the severity of potential tree hazards, including determining the extent of internal wood decay, using the latest information and techniques via an advanced level seminar (p.29, #5.a.i)					
6. <i>Young Tree Structural Pruning Training</i>					
☐ Train at least 2 Department of Public Works employees, at least 2 Shade Tree Commission members, and local contractors in pruning young trees to promote the development of a structurally sound trunk and crown form, minimize conflicts and minimize the need for severe pruning in the future via a hands-on program (p. 29, #6.a.i)					
PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS & OUTREACH					
1. <i>Ongoing Public Education, Awareness & Outreach Programs</i>					
☐ Continue all existing public education, awareness, and outreach programs on a regular basis (p.31, #1.a.i)					
2. <i>Arbor Day Programs</i>					
☐ Continue to plan, organize, and conduct annual Arbor Day celebrations; Continue to seek assistance from the Board of Education, local civic groups, local businesses, and others; Vary the location, activities, and target audience each year to widen interest and support for the Community Forestry Program (p.31, #2.a.i)					

Objectives / Tasks	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PUBLIC EDUCATION, AWARENESS & OUTREACH, cont'd					
3. <i>Tree City USA</i>					
☐ Prepare and submit the annual application for designation as a Tree City USA; Prepare and submit applications for Tree City USA Growth Awards when eligibility requirements are met; Continually advertise the designation by displaying the program's promotional materials (p.31, #3.a.i-iii)					
4. <i>Press Releases & Educational Materials</i>					
☐ Ensure that information on the Shade Tree Commission webpage is kept current, complete, and routinely refreshed; Continue to issue at least 3 press releases per year covering activities and accomplishments of the Community Forestry Program, current tree health concerns, requests for Trees for Tomorrow donations, etc.; Produce and distribute at least 1 new promotional piece or educational article per year (p.31, #4.a.i-iii)					
TREE INVENTORY & ASSESSMENT					
1. <i>Ongoing Tree Inventory + Assessment Programs</i>					
☐ Continue using existing tree inventory data to facilitate day-to-day operations, evaluate the state of the street tree resource, and direct efforts to the Overall Program Goals (p.33, #1.a.i)					
2. <i>Street Tree Inventory Completion</i>					
☐ Develop plans to complete the street tree inventory begun in 2017; Prepare cost-estimates for completing the remaining streets and merging the datasets; Obtain necessary funding (p.33, #2.a.i-ii)					
☐ Complete inventory data collection, merge the newly collected data with the 2017 dataset, and produce various summary reports characterizing the street tree population, and existing planting and maintenance needs (p.33, #2.b.i)					
☐ Begin integrating the inventory findings into ongoing planning and management activities; Begin completing, or directing responsible property owners to complete, all maintenance needs identified in order of priority based on safety concerns; If feasible, develop procedures for continually updating the inventory as trees are planted and removed (p.34, #2.c.i-iii)					
TREE HAZARD MANAGEMENT					
1. <i>Ongoing Tree Hazard Management Programs</i>					
☐ Continue all existing tree hazard management programs; Complete all priority maintenance work identified by the recent street tree inventory; Continue to address hazard abatement needs as they are identified in priority order (p.35, #1.a.i-ii)					

Objectives / Tasks	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
TREE PLANTING					
1. <i>Ongoing Tree Planting Programs</i> ☐ Continue all existing tree planting programs (p.30, #1.a.i)					
2. <i>Annual Tree Planting Program Funding</i> ☐ Continually stress the critical importance of consistent annual tree planting to increase and perpetuate the Borough's tree population and canopy cover; Support annual budget requests with street tree inventory data, planting requests from residents, and other documentation; Develop and implement advertising methods for increasing participation in the Trees for Tomorrow initiative in advance of the spring planting season; Investigate and apply to various grant programs to help fund tree planting projects (p.37, #2.a.i-v)					
TREE MAINTENANCE					
1. <i>Ongoing Tree Maintenance Programs</i> ☐ Continue all existing tree maintenance programs, policies and procedures on a regular basis (p.41, #1.a.i)					
2. <i>Priority Maintenance Work</i> ☐ Upon completion of the Street Tree Inventory, organize list of high priority tree maintenance needs identified notify property owners of work they are responsible for, and develop cost-estimates for completing work the Borough is responsible for; As necessary, seek and secure the necessary funding (p.41, #2.a.i-ii) ☐ Ensure completion of all high priority work identified by the Street Tree Inventory (p.41, #2.b.i)					
TREE WASTE RECYCLING					
1. <i>Ongoing Tree Waste Recycling Programs</i> ☐ Continue all existing tree waste recycling programs, policies and procedures (p.42, #1.a.i)					
TREE CARE DISASTER PLAN					
1. <i>Ongoing Programs</i> ☐ Continue all existing programs, policies and procedures; Reduce risks via other elements of this Plan (p.44, #1.a.i-ii)					
PLAN PREPARATION & EVALUATION					
1. <i>Annual Program Evaluation</i> ☐ Evaluate the prior year's accomplishments, identify objectives not yet completed, and adjust programs, as necessary; Prepare and submit an <i>Annual Accomplishment Report</i> to NJFS (p.45, #1.a.i-iii)					

Objectives / Tasks	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
PLAN PREPARATION & EVALUATION, <i>cont'd</i>					
2. <i>Five-Year Evaluation</i>					
☐ Evaluate the Community Forestry Program's accomplishments during the current 5-year management period; Evaluate progress toward the overall goals of the Program; Begin formulating new objectives and program adjustments (p.45, #2.a.i-iii)					
3. <i>2025 – 2029 Management Plan Development</i>					
☐ Finalize new objectives and program adjustments and prepare and submit a Community Forestry Management Plan for the 2025 – 2029 management period (p.45, #3.a.i-ii)					
☐ Obtain State approval of the 2025 – 2029 Community Forestry Management Plan (p.45, #3.b.i)					



Related Ordinances

RELATED ORDINANCES

1. Chapter 340, *Trees*, which establishes the Atlantic Highlands Shade Tree Commission, provides for the planting and protection of public trees, and delegates maintenance of street trees to the adjacent property owner.

Chapter 340. Trees

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands 12-13-1995 by Ord. No. 21-95. Amendments noted where applicable.]

GENERAL REFERENCES

Property maintenance — See Ch. 265.

Streets and sidewalks — See Ch. 317.

§ 340-1. Establishment.

The regulation, planning, care and control of shade and ornamental trees upon and in streets, highways, public places, parks and parkways of this municipality, other than county parks and parkways, shall be managed by and under the control and the authority of a Commission which shall be known as the "Shade Tree Commission of the Borough of Atlantic Highlands," in accordance with N.J.S.A. 40:64-1 et seq.

§ 340-2. Membership; qualifications; compensation.

- A. The Shade Tree Commission shall consist of five members and a maximum of two alternate members who shall be appointed by the Mayor, shall be residents of the Borough, and shall serve without compensation except as hereinafter provided.
- B. The first Commission shall be appointed within 60 days after this chapter shall be effective, and said Commission shall organize within 30 days after the appointment of its membership for the remainder of the then calendar year and, thereafter, annually.
- C. The Commission shall select one of its members as Chairman annually, and the Commission shall appoint a Secretary, who need not be a member of the Commission. The salary for the Secretary shall be fixed by the Borough Council.

§ 340-3. Terms of office; vacancies.

- A. The term of office of each member shall commence upon the day of appointment, and, in the case of the original Commission, the five members shall be appointed for one-year, two-year, three-year, four-year and five-year appointments, respectively. Said terms on the original appointment shall be from the day of appointment until December 31 of the next calendar year. The names of the appointees and their specific terms must be set forth in the appointment by the Mayor.
- B. The terms of office of the alternate members shall commence upon the day of appointment, and said appointees will be designated as "Alternate No. 1" and "Alternate No. 2," and, in the case of the original appointees, Alternate No. 1 will serve from the day of appointment until December 3 of the next calendar year, and Alternate No. 2 will serve from the day of appointment until December 31 in the second calendar year. The names of the appointees and their specific terms shall be set forth in the appointment by the Mayor.
- C. All subsequent appointments after the original appointments, except to fill vacancies, shall be for full terms of five years, or for two years as to the alternates, each to take effect on January 1.
- D. Any vacancy occurring by reason of death, resignation or removal of any Commissioner shall be filled for the unexpired term by the Mayor.

§ 340-4. Powers.

Said Commission shall possess and be vested with the powers as per N.J.S.A. 40:64-5, including:

- A. To exercise full and exclusive control over the regulation, planting, and care of shade and ornamental trees now located or which may hereafter be planted in any public highway, park or parkway, including the planting, trimming, spraying, care and protection thereof.
- B. To regulate and control the use of the ground surrounding the same so far as may be necessary for their proper growth, care and protection.
- C. To move or require the removal of any tree or part thereof on public or private property that is dangerous to public safety.
- D. To make, alter, amend and repeal, in the manner prescribed for the passage, alteration, amendment and repeal of ordinances by the Borough Council, any and all ordinances necessary or proper for carrying out the provisions hereof.^[1]

[1] Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

- E. To administer treatment to or remove any tree on public or private property which is believed to harbor a disease or insects readily communicable to neighboring healthy trees and to enter upon private property for that purpose, provided that the suspected condition is first properly confirmed.
- F. To study and recommend methods of funding, outside of municipal taxation, by grants and aid, both state and federal.
- G. To develop a program of tree planting and overall beautification in areas along the public right-of-way and to prepare a survey of existing trees within the public right-of-way and upon public property and to develop a master plan for the care and control of existing shade trees and ornamental trees and the planting of new trees throughout the Borough, said survey and master plan shall be submitted to Borough Council for its review and approval annually, by February 1 of the next succeeding year.
- H. To provide a procedure for removing or trimming existing trees where necessary because the tree is either dead, diseased or injured by storm or similar consequences.
- I. To adopt and administer regulations for the selection and placement of trees and as may be necessary for the interpretation, administration, and enforcement of the powers and authority of the Commission.

§ 340-5. Public improvements affecting trees.

No statute giving any person or governmental board, body or official the power or authority to lay any sidewalk along or to open, construct, curb or pave any street or to do any similar act shall be construed to permit or authorize any interference with or injury to a street shade tree without the consent of the Commission. The Commission shall reasonably cooperate with such person, board, body or official for the public good.

§ 340-6. Annual appropriation.

- A. During December in each year, the Commission shall certify to the Borough Council the estimated sum necessary for the proper conduct of its work during the ensuing fiscal year, to include the sums estimated for such of the following items as it is anticipated expenditure will be made for, that is:
 - (1) Payment of wages and salaries of employees.
 - (2) Expenses of Commission members in discharging official duties, including expenses incident to attendance at professional meetings.
 - (3) Purchase of trees and shrubbery.
 - (4) Purchase of necessary equipment and materials and the cost of services for the prudent promotion of the work, including expenses for tree trimming and removal.

- B. The Borough Council shall annually appropriate such sum as it may deem necessary for said purposes.
- C. The Commission may accept gifts or donations from public-spirited citizens for use for Commission purposes.

§ 340-7. Public tree care; removal of injurious trees.

- A. The Borough or Commission shall have the right to plant, prune, maintain and remove trees, plants and shrubs within the lines of all streets, alleys, avenues, lanes, squares and public grounds, as may be necessary to provide to public safety or to preserve or enhance the symmetry and beauty of such public grounds. There shall be no charge to residents for a tree planted by the Borough on Borough property. A resident is permitted to request a planting of a tree or trees for which he/she wishes to make as a donation for covering costs.
- B. The Borough or Commission may remove or cause or order to be removed any tree or part thereof which is in any unsafe condition or is injurious to sewer lines, gas lines, waterlines or other public improvements or is affected with any injurious fungus, insect or other pest. The Commission shall endeavor to give reasonable notice of its intention to remove or to cause the removal of a tree or part of a tree to the abutting or interested owner, unless public safety requires immediate removal, in which case no notice shall be necessary.
- C. A resident has the right, for good reason, to object to the planting of a tree in front of his residence, which objection will be considered and the final determination shall be made by the Commission.

§ 340-8. Tree topping.

It shall be unlawful as a normal practice for any person or firm to top any street tree, park tree or other tree on public property. "Topping" is defined as the severe cutting back of limbs to stubs larger than three inches in diameter within the tree's crown to such a degree so as to remove the normal canopy and disfigure the tree. Trees severely damaged by storms or other causes or certain trees under utility wires or other obstructions where other pruning practices are impractical may be exempted from this chapter at the determination of the Commission.

§ 340-9. Pruning; corner clearance.

Every owner of any tree overhanging any street or right-of-way shall prune the branches so that such branches shall not obstruct the view of any street intersection and shall not obstruct the light from any street lamp and so that there shall be a clear space of eight feet above the surface of the street or sidewalk. Said owners shall remove all dead, diseased, or dangerous trees or broken or decayed limbs which constitute a menace to the safety of the public. The Borough or Commission shall have the right, but not the obligation, to prune any tree or shrub on private property when it interferes with the proper spread of light along the street from a streetlight, visibility of any traffic control device or sign, or passage on a public street or sidewalk.

§ 340-10. License required for arborists; exceptions.

Any person or firm engaged in the regular and primary business or occupation of pruning, treating or removing trees must first apply for and procure a license in order to work within the Borough. The license fee shall be paid in advance, in such amount as provided in Chapter 168, Article II. No license shall be required of any public service company or Borough department doing such work in pursuit of their public service endeavors nor from any private property owner performing work on his property either by the owner or some agent, casually engaged by the owner, whose primary occupation is not tree removal or pruning or arborist work.

[1] Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

§ 340-11. Ownership; approval required prior to work by property owners on curbside trees.

Trees planted or existing between the curbline and the sidewalk abutting property are the responsibility of the property owner, subject, however, to the authority of the Shade Tree Commission as provided in this section. The property owner is required to maintain the area between the curbline and the sidewalk. The abutting property owner may plant street trees in this area, provided the consent of the Commission is obtained and the selection and location is in accord with Commission rules.

§ 340-12. Attachment of items to curbside trees prohibited.

It is unlawful to attach, in any manner, chains or signs of any sort to any curbside tree or to place nails into any curbside tree.

§ 340-13. Violations and penalties; enforcement.

- A. The Commission may prescribe a fine for the violation of each of its ordinances and regulations in an amount not exceeding \$1,500 for each violation, and the Atlantic Highlands Municipal Court shall have jurisdiction over actions for the violation of ordinances or regulations of the Commission.
- B. The ordinances and regulations shall be enforced by like proceedings and process, and the practice for the enforcement thereof shall be the same as that provided by law for the enforcement of the ordinances of the Borough.
- C. In addition, the Commission shall have the right to require any person who removes or destroys a tree in violation of ordinance and regulation to pay a replacement assessment as per N.J.S.A. 40:64-12.

§ 340-14. Limitation of liability.

Nothing contained in this chapter shall be construed to make the Shade Tree Commission or any member thereof, or the Borough, responsible for the death or injury of any person or for any injury to any property or highway tree or shrub.